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The Mennonite

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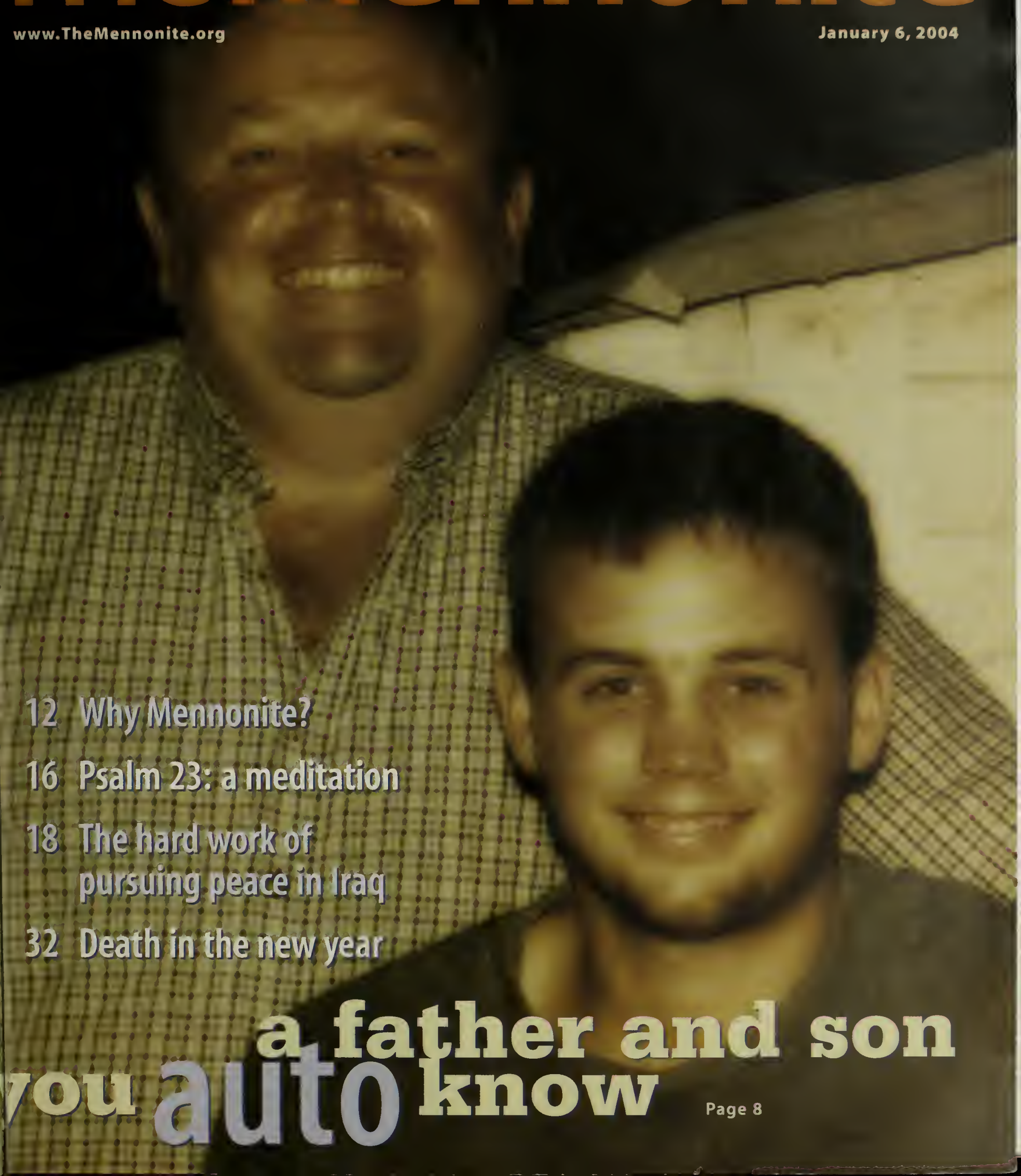
January 6, 2004



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And on earth peace …

Gilberto Flores serves as director of leadership development and denominational minister for Mennonite Church USA. He served 25 years as a pastor and church planter in Guatemala, Honduras and Texas.

I like Luke's version of the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:8-19). First is the announcement, then we are put in the immediate human, social and political context. It is a story with roots in the concrete experience of towns and people.

The announcement is a revelation for the benefit of the individuals receiving the heavenly message, these individuals, as a consequence have to celebrate this blessing this announcement contains. The angel declares that this news will be of great rejoicing for the people. The people are the ones who are displaced, in need of hope, who suffer hardship and do not have many opportunities. It is important that the angel took its time to visit the shepherds and tell them about the birth of the Son of God.

The angels highlight two things: Jesus is the Savior or Liberator, and he is also the Christ, God's anointed. These two affirmations had and continue to have practical implications for listeners.

The coming of a Savior in that context for the shepherds' ears sounded as a ring of hope. We cannot ignore the sociopolitical implications of that declaration.

> **The arrival of Jesus is the arrival of peace. It has to be this way, because the essence of the good news is reconciliation. No more enmity, no more enemies.**

The second affirmation relates to an expectation rooted in the religious Jewish conscience, as is the coming of the Messiah. In those days, religion, social life and politics were tightly interwoven. A Messiah-Savior inflamed all expectant hearts.

The author then changes the scene, from the announcement to the celebration. Like the announcement, the celebration has surprising implications. We can imagine a resounding song, with powerful voices celebrating the God that remembers the poor, the sinners, the women, the outcasts. This song celebrates the fulfillment of a purpose that only can find a place in a generous heart without measurement, the heart of the good God revealed in the Bible. Glory to God in the highest. It has been a pleasure in God's heart to become incarnate in human history. No more distance. God is here. Glory to God in the highest.

Immediately after the praising comes the phrase "and on earth peace." This can be a blessing, a promise and a challenge to the believers committed to the goodness and the kindness of God. The angels do not take time to explain this last part of their song and announcement. The angels simply leave the shepherds in deep thought and reflection.

The arrival of Jesus is the arrival of peace. It has to be this way, because the essence of the good news is reconciliation. No more enmity, no more enemies. Jesus always taught the importance of a pacifist life. He invited his disciples to do unto others, as they wanted to be done unto themselves, and he commanded them to love their enemies.

The end of this story points to the great Christian dream of a reconciled world at peace, a world where only God is exalted because no one else is greater or more powerful. As this blessing-promise-challenge is fulfilled, there should be people of goodwill who want to embrace the commitment inherent in the gospel, that all people live in peace.

Let's think about the implications of this story for us who live in a powerful country where even some Christians think that to kill the enemy honors the God of Peace. TM

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Mennonite Church USA

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Confession of sin?

Thank you for the dialogical format of the two articles on whether confession of sin belongs in Mennonite worship services ("Liturgical Confession of Sin," Dec. 2, 2003). I appreciate Marlene Kropf's reminder of the dynamic principle of *lex orandi, lex credendi*. John Cassian (360-432) reminds us that we send the thoughts of our heart ahead to where we will shortly follow. So, too, what we include or don't include in our acts of worship reveal not only who we worship but also point to where we will "shortly follow" in our belief.

I question the limitation to a psychological therapeutic presented in Marlin Jeschke's article. I also need a spiritual therapeutic that runs deeper than self-worth and is antecedent to any healthy spiritual life within us. Is Jeschke suggesting that we dispense with publically praying the pattern prayer Christ taught his disciples? To pray, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us," is to implicitly confess our sin. Confessing sins to each other, along with prayer, is a significant aspect of health.

I often wonder how confessional and spiritual directors could be reintroduced into our community life. Would there be less need for the modern-day confessional of the psychiatrist's couch?—*Ray Reitz, Mountville, Pa.*

What an interesting contrast of articles on liturgical confession in the Dec. 2, 2003, issue. Marlin Jeschke's article opposing liturgical confession suggested a lot of what could be right about Christianity but is not. On the other hand, Marlene Kropf's article in favor of liturgical confession embodied a lot of what is wrong and inhumane about Christianity.—*Tom Shelly, Bloomington, Minn.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Our first issue of 2004 carries nearly eight pages of news about the church at work around the world and developments within Mennonite Church USA. Two stories from Paraguay (page 19) report on the longevity of a starch manufacturing plant—the first Mennonite Economic Development Associates project launched 50 years ago—and a request from the president of Paraguay to the Mennonite Brethren congregation in Ascunción for help with a "war on corruption." From other hemispheres come stories about the mission endeavor in central Asia by Friends of the Uzbeck (page 20), a Nigerian who teaches Bible and religion at a school for the deaf in Jos (page 23) and an isolated Christian congregation in Anren, China (page 23). News from the home front includes staff cuts at *The Mennonite* (page 21) and an expanding program by Eastern Mennonite University that helps church leaders in New York City deal with the trauma of Sept. 11, 2001 (page 21).—*Editor*

Use all of Menno's words

In his article ("Is the Future of Evangelicalism Anabaptist?" Nov. 18, 2003), David Q. Evans quotes historian Donald Dayton, who says modern evangelical-based editions of works of 19th-century evangelists are often expurgated to remove the social aspect of their message. Evans says the evangelicals of the 19th century were as concerned for the individual's soul as they were for the structures of society, but only half their views are now shared.

It seems ironic that we Mennonites have done the same thing with quotes by Menno Simons. We have chosen to emphasize the social aspects he expressed. Evans quotes—and the graphic shows—an often-quoted statement by Menno. This quote is usually seen with commas and periods so that it looks like a complete quote, but it isn't. While the phrases mentioned are critical to true evangelical faith, Menno also mentions other necessary items. Here is the whole quote with the missing parts in bold.

"**For** true evangelical faith **is of such a nature that it** cannot lie dormant, **but manifests itself in all righteousness and works of love; it dies unto the flesh and blood; it destroys all forbidden lusts and desires; it seeks and serves and fears God**; it clothes the naked; it feeds the hungry; it comforts the sorrowful; it shelters the destitute; **it aids and consoles the sad; it returns good for evil**; it serves those that harm it; **it prays for those that persecute it; teaches, admonishes, and reproves with the Word of the Lord; it seeks that which is lost**; it binds up that which is wounded; **it heals that which is diseased and it saves that which is sound**; It has become all things to all men."

We as a church have emphasized human relationships so strongly that we neglect the emphasis on nurturing our relationship with God. Unless the vertical relationship with God stays strong, the good horizontal things we are doing will eventually wither and die.—*Gary Oyer, Hesston, Kan.*

Good fences, better freedoms

I commend *The Mennonite* for printing the article "Good Fences, Better Freedoms" (Speaking Out, Nov. 4, 2003) by Harvey Yoder. Bravo to Harvey for writing the article and having it printed. I would appreciate having a copy of the "Ten Commandments to Righteousness."

I've felt for a long time that pastors need to preach about the things youth and adults face in our world today: premarital sex, drugs, alcohol, smoking and pornographic materials, to name a few. Pastors need to reinforce from behind the pulpit what parents hopefully are trying to teach their children.—*Marietta Slabach, Nappanee, Ind.*

Watch and pray

Duane Beck's article "Watch and Pray" (Speaking Out, Dec. 2, 2003) was very scriptural, creative, prophetic, practical and helpful. As we review history, we see why nations have fallen (Israel not excluded). God has his ways of dealing with those who refuse God's loving ways. Let us follow God, not political leaders. History reflects God's leading of political leaders. We worship the overall Leader.—*Carl L. Smeltzer, Souderton, Pa.*

Jesus as our substitute

J. Nelson Kraybill's article ("Four Spiritual Truths of a Peacemaking God," Nov. 4, 2003) minimized the popular doctrine of substitutionary atonement. Letters of response (Readers Say, Dec. 2, 2003) have debated the issue.

The problem with this doctrine is illustrated in the following story: I burned my neighbor's house down and got caught. I was tried and convicted. At the sentencing hearing, my saintly other neighbor offered to serve my prison sentence for me. What did the judge say regarding this offer?

My point is that in a culture where animal sacrifice is universally understood, the doctrine of substitutionary atonement makes sense. We do not live in such a culture. It requires a perverse act of will to accede to such a doctrine.

Doctrines of theology are not the truth; they are metaphors for an unspeakable truth. The reality of forgiveness is unspeakable, and the metaphors we use to speak about it must be culture-bound. It is up to us modern people to invent new, appropriate metaphors to communicate with and guide our young and unbelievers to faith, to the unspeakable experience of forgiveness.—*Andy Zaugg, La Jara, Colo.*

A universal effect must have a universal cause. All are sinners as a result of Adam's sin, which passed to all of humanity. All are born under the curse of sin and so have a sin nature. If this is not true, we cannot explain the need for a virgin birth.

Adam and Eve sinned. God immediately shed the blood of an animal and clothed them. Animal sacrifice temporarily covered the sin. Christ, the perfect sacrifice, met the demands of a Holy God. When Christ, being sinless and not having inherited the sin nature, died, he imputed us with the righteousness Adam lost. To teach the ethics of Christ without the cross of Christ is anti-Christ. —*Oren Miller, Gulfport, Miss.*

Let's hear more about spiritual gifts

Thank you, Willard Swartley, for your article "Binding the Strong Man" (Nov. 18, 2003). As 1 Corinthians 12:7 says, "It is for the profit of all." Let's hear more about all the spiritual gifts.—*Ann M. Kauffman, Goshen, Ind.*

Calling your pastor Joe

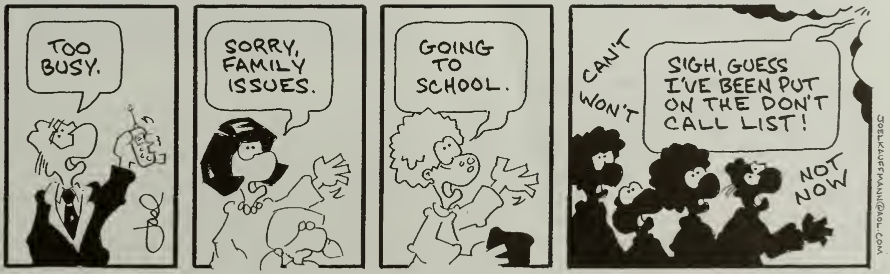
Responses to my article "Should You Call Your Pastor Joe?" (Oct. 21, 2003) have helped balance the discussion. Encouraging dialogue on the role of pastoral leadership in Mennonite Church USA was a goal in writing the article. It is to our advantage as a denomination to uphold the office of pastor with honor and respect and it is beneficial for congregations to view pastoral ministry as a special calling. So keep calling your pastor Joe, if that is the address you are comfortable with, but make sure that your pastor knows he is no "average Joe."—*Tim Schultz, Clarence, N.Y.*

Prepared to give an answer?

Is it really true that few Mennonites speak boldly about their faith ("To Speak or Not to Speak," Nov. 4, 2003)? Mennonites do emphasize holy living, but I never heard that Jesus' command to go and make disciples was countermanded by St. Francis. I am bothered by the implication that Mennonites are generally silent and speaking about our faith is optional. Is the real Mennonite prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks (1 Peter 3:15) or one who keeps quiet (Amos 5:13) about her faith? —*Carol Bucher Bixler, Indianapolis*

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. —*Editors*

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**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this date in Mennonite history

Jan. 6, 1944— Longtime Mennonite Church leader Daniel Kauffman dies near Parnell, Iowa, at the age of 79.

CPT worker gets Japanese award

CHICAGO—In recognition of her work with Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), Peggy Gish received the Yoko Tada Human Rights Award in a Dec. 18, 2003, ceremony in Tokyo.

Gish was nominated by Masakazu Honda, a journalist with the *Asahi Shimbun,* a Tokyo newspaper. He interviewed her in Amman, Jordan, in March after Gish and other CPT workers left Iraq due to pressures from the Iraqi government.

"I just happened to be the one [Honda] interviewed," said Gish, who shared her experiences with other groups while in Japan. "It was the work he was excited about. … I'm accepting this award not just for myself but for CPT's work in Iraq."

Of the three Yoko Tada awards presented each year in Japan, one is made to overseas grass-roots campaigners working for human rights. The awards commemorate the life of Yoko Tada, a human-rights lawyer who was involved in numerous high-profile campaigns until her death at the age of 29 in 1989. Past recipients include Jinzaburo Takagi, who alerted the Japanese public to the dangers of Japan's plutonium program, Cumbrians Against a Radioactive Environment, which worked to stop nuclear transports between England and Japan, Suh Sung for his work promoting democracy in South Korea, and Michèle Pierre-Louis for her work with women's health issues in Haiti.—*CPT News Service*

Native groups discuss merger

RIVERTON, Man.—Native church leaders met in Winnipeg and Riverton Nov. 5-8, 2003, to discuss the formation of a new organization to nurture Native American Mennonites in discipleship, provide leadership training, develop ministries and work at conflict resolution.

Representatives of the Mennonite Indian Leaders Council, which had been affiliated with the General Conference Mennonite Church, and the United Native Ministries Council, which had been affiliated with the former Mennonite Church, met to discuss formation of a new organization inviting all Native American Mennonite congregations in the United States to work in partnership with Native Ministries Canada of Mennonite Church Canada.

"I see this new organization as an opportunity for Native Americans to become a stronger, more visible presence in Mennonite Church USA," says Marty Bender, Mennonite Mission Network's program coordinator for missional church development.

The formal date for the beginning of the new organization and its name are yet to be determined. Representatives plan to continue the dialogue with their congregations, meeting again in March. —*Mennonite Mission Network*

Mennonite Mission Network photo by Gretchen Kingsley

A good read

An Argentine man flips through a book for sale by Mennonite Mission Network worker Keith Kingsley (left). The sale of Bibles and other Christian literature is part of the work of Kingsley and his wife, Gretchen, as they serve with the Toba, an Argentinian ethnic group.

Bluffton gets surprise donation

BLUFFTON, Ohio—This past summer, Stan Clemens, vice president for institutional advancement at Bluffton College, paid a visit to an alumnus who had never returned to campus, hadn't made a contribution, hadn't stayed in touch with fellow students since his graduation 50 years earlier.

The man initiated the conversation. "I wasn't sure why he wanted a visit," Clemens said.

The reason is now clear. The man—whose name is being withheld—wanted to donate his entire estate, worth an estimated $1.2 million, to his alma mater. The gift makes the man, a retired social worker, the third most generous donor on Bluffton's list of lifetime giving by an individual.

Clemens recalled the man saying, "I was a social work major, and Bluffton took good care of me. I was not religious then and I am not religious now, but the Mennonites accepted me for who I was. They served me, and I respected them for that."

"I had found a new friend," Clemens said. "I left with a plan to return for later visits."

But Clemens learned the next day that the man was rushed to the hospital four hours after their visit. He was terminally ill and never returned home. The donor was able to complete the paperwork while in the hospital. Three days later, on Sept. 2, he died.

"He demonstrates that we interact with our students at a pivotal time in their lives," Clemens says. "A meaningful word of support, a gesture to help locate a summer job or a mentoring relationship is often the outcome of faculty-student interaction at Bluffton College. My new friend illustrates that these meaningful relationships are not forgotten."

Canadian giving behind budget

WINNIPEG—With two months left in its fiscal year, Mennonite Church Canada had received 64 percent of its budgeted income, needing $2.5 million (Cdn.) by Jan. 31.

Mennonite Church Canada, which had to make deep cuts in 2003, is experiencing the continuation of a trend in which congregational giving is decreasing while individual and corporate giving is increasing, said Al Rempel, director of resource development. "So far, the two are balancing each other out."

To encourage giving, Mennonite Church Canada is using electronic fund transfer, or EFT, a banking feature that allows donors to preauthorize and preset regular automatic transfers from their bank accounts to Mennonite Church Canada. Donors can also make contributions via the denomination's Web site.

"It's a very convenient way to give at the last minute for anyone who may have forgotten to write and post a check before the close of the income-tax year," Rempel says.

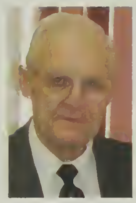
He says he is cautiously optimistic about balancing the budget, having asked congregations of their giving intentions for the rest of this fiscal year and for next year. "It's gratifying to see congregations respond," Rempel says. "It's a tremendous help knowing what to anticipate."—*Mennonite Church Canada News Service*

MCC photo by Alain Epp Weaver

Meals to go

Ayad Nasser Mohammedeen (right) of the West Bank village of Bani Naim receives a food parcel from Nidal Sultan, a worker with Catholic Relief Services. CRS, Mennonite Central Committee and Lutheran World Federation recently joined efforts to distribute 2,000 packets to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The packets included olives, olive oil, thyme, green wheat, honey and soap.

MCC Canada turns 40 years old



J.M. Klassen

WINNIPEG—J.M. Klassen clearly remembers Dec. 13-14, 1963. That is when representatives from five Mennonite organizations gathered at Portage Avenue Mennonite Brethren Church in Winnipeg to discuss their future. What emerged was Mennonite Central Committee Canada to complement the work of MCC, at that time the relief and development agency of U.S. churches.

Klassen, MCC Canada's executive director from 1963 to 1970 and from 1976 to 1984, spoke on the organization's 40th anniversary during its annual meeting Nov. 29, 2003, in Winnipeg.

"The actual creation of MCC Canada was not that simple, nor was it easy," he said. "[These] five inter-Mennonite agencies, which had served their respective constituencies for so many years, seemed to have grown old and stiff. The younger generation no longer regarded the obstacles that kept them apart."

The organizations that formed MCC Canada were the Nonresistant Relief Organization, based in Ontario; Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council in the western provinces; Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee in Manitoba; Conference of Historic Peace Churches in Ontario; and the national Historic Peace Church Council of Canada.

"MCC Canada cannot rest on its laurels," Klassen said. "It must remain … energetic, creative and flexible. It must remain true to its calling to be engaged in the kinds of things that Jesus did and taught his disciples to do. We must simply be ready to respond to the needs and opportunities as we become aware of them. We must continue to allow individuals, churches, conferences and other entities to contribute their vision, their support in money, in goods-in-kind and in personnel."—*MCC Canada News Service*

Clarification: The withdrawal of three partner organizations from Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission did not prompt AIMM's recently adopted plan to reshape itself, as reported in the Dec. 2, 2003, issue. Rather, their leaving occurred after reshaping discussions had started.

A father and son

you auto know

An interest in cars led this father and son to enroll together.

by Jim Bishop

After more than 20 years of building or adding additions to houses for others, Dale Lehman of Harrisonburg, Va., was ready to do some reconstructing of his own life.

As he explored different options, his 18-year-old son Jason, having just graduated from Eastern Mennonite High School, was doing the same.

Their paths intersected this fall as they both enrolled at the same school in western Pennsylvania. Not only will they take a year of classes at the Blairsville branch of Wyoming Technical Institute, they'll also share an apartment close to the school.

Jason says he's long enjoyed tinkering with cars and that his interest was tweaked when family members acquired a battered 1949 Plymouth and a 1970 Chevy Nova in running condition. He started thinking about how best to sharpen both his interests and skills needed to restore old vehicles like these.

Dale's long-time dream was to own a 1934 Ford convertible with a rumble seat. He eventually located one for sale in Charlottesville, Va., but when he went to look at it, it was "a pile of rust.

"The car was still restorable, but I knew it was beyond my ability level to tackle," Dale says.

Dale and Jason often spent Sunday afternoons watching "muscle car" shows on a cable TV channel. The Wyoming Technical Institute, based in Laramie, ran commercials on one program, and Dale noted that they had a branch campus in Pennsylvania.

If Dad is interested in going there, I am, too.
—Jason Lehman

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

Our small group at [Community Mennonite] Church has already assured us of their support, which is comforting.—Rita Lehman

Dale and Jason Lehman with their 1949 Plymouth.

Dale requested information on the school, which he shared with Jason and asked what he thought about attending together.

"I thought, if Dad is interested in going there, I am, too," Jason says.

Turn people's heads: For six months, Jason is taking classes in auto mechanics and engine diagnostics, then will move to elective courses in high-performance engines and chassis fabrication—meaning how to turn a standard vehicle body into something that will turn people's heads when it cruises down the highway or racetrack.

Dale's study focus at the school is collision refinishing, with an emphasis on custom body fabrication and trim and upholstery. He doesn't expect to be in any classes with his son.

"We're impressed with the professional emphasis of the school," Dale says. "About 40 percent of the time is classroom instruction and 60 percent lab experience. They are strict on attendance and are committed to preparing students for the workplace, presenting a positive image for future employers and customers."

Jason, who wasn't immediately interested in attending a four-year college, says he "looks forward to studying what I really want to learn" at the institute.

Dale admits to some anxiety in this regard, having once again to focus on grades and competencies after having been out of school some 23 years, except for two classes he took last year at Massanutten Technical Center. He graduated from Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg in 1976 and took one year of pharmacy school in Michigan and one year of seminary studies after moving back to Harrisonburg.

Dale, who sees this adventure as a sabbatical, plans to put his construction business on hold for the school year but expects to start it up again after he and Jason return to Harrisonburg.

"We could eventually start an automotive business and mechanic shop together," Dale says. "We'll take a wait-and-see approach."

How does Rita feel about her spouse's and son's aspirations?

"Dale tried to convince me to take a leave of absence from my work, but I love my nursing job at the Rockingham Memorial Hospital Cancer Center, and a four-hour drive to see them isn't so far. Our small group at [Community Mennonite] Church has already assured us of their support, which is comforting," Rita says.

"Actually, I think what they're planning to do is great," she adds, "and it's even better that they're doing this together and can keep an eye on each other."

And possibly form a father-son business partnership on down the road. TM

Jim Bishop is public information officer at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

Unemployed

The struggle to choose being over doing

by John Ratigan

I am one of the unemployed. This means I do not currently collect a regular paycheck for duties or services in return for money.

To be unemployed and struggling to look for meaningful, gainful employment leads me to ask what this means to me and what it means to you.

For many of us in this nation, the worth of who I am and who you are is wrapped up in our employment—where we work, what we do, how much money we make. When we meet someone new, what do we ask? "Nice to meet you, Pat. So what do you do?" Yes, this can create a topic of conversation, perhaps revealing what we have in common with our new acquaintance. But it also assigns unfair value, even judgment.

A few years ago I was a stay-at-home dad with our daughter, Nicole, while Kristin was a high school teacher. Whenever we were in social situations and met someone new, invariably the conversation went something like this: "So, Kristin, what do you do?"

"I am a high school teacher at an alternative high school."

"Oh, interesting. How about you, John?"

"I am a stay-at-home dad with our daughter, Nicole."

"Oh. So, Kristin, tell me about this alternative high school."

Often I was dismissed as unimportant, unvalued.

Should I or we gain our value from our employment? Should we obtain our worth from how much money we make—or don't make? Should we allow other people to assign us our significance—based on anything?

As a Christian and a believer on my journey to continue to know God more fully, I am supposed to obtain my worth as a lovingly made creation, touched with the gift of life from a divinely intuitive Creator who longs to show me who I really am. Why do I forget this so easily and sway toward a focus on doing rather than being?

One Sunday a small group of these categorically unemployed people from our congregation met to share our struggles and insights with each other. I was reluctant to meet because I thought, What's the point? I don't have a job. If I meet, will I walk away with a job? No. Is that progress? Obviously I am stuck in the doing mode.

However, our time together was productive, even if merely to say, individually and collectively, "This is a difficult time." It was a time for one to talk, others to listen. We discussed how valuable this is. When someone faces a difficult time, listening can create a time of being rather than doing. When people are grieving a loss, they want to be heard and have others around—not to resolve it for them. They want others to be rather than to do.

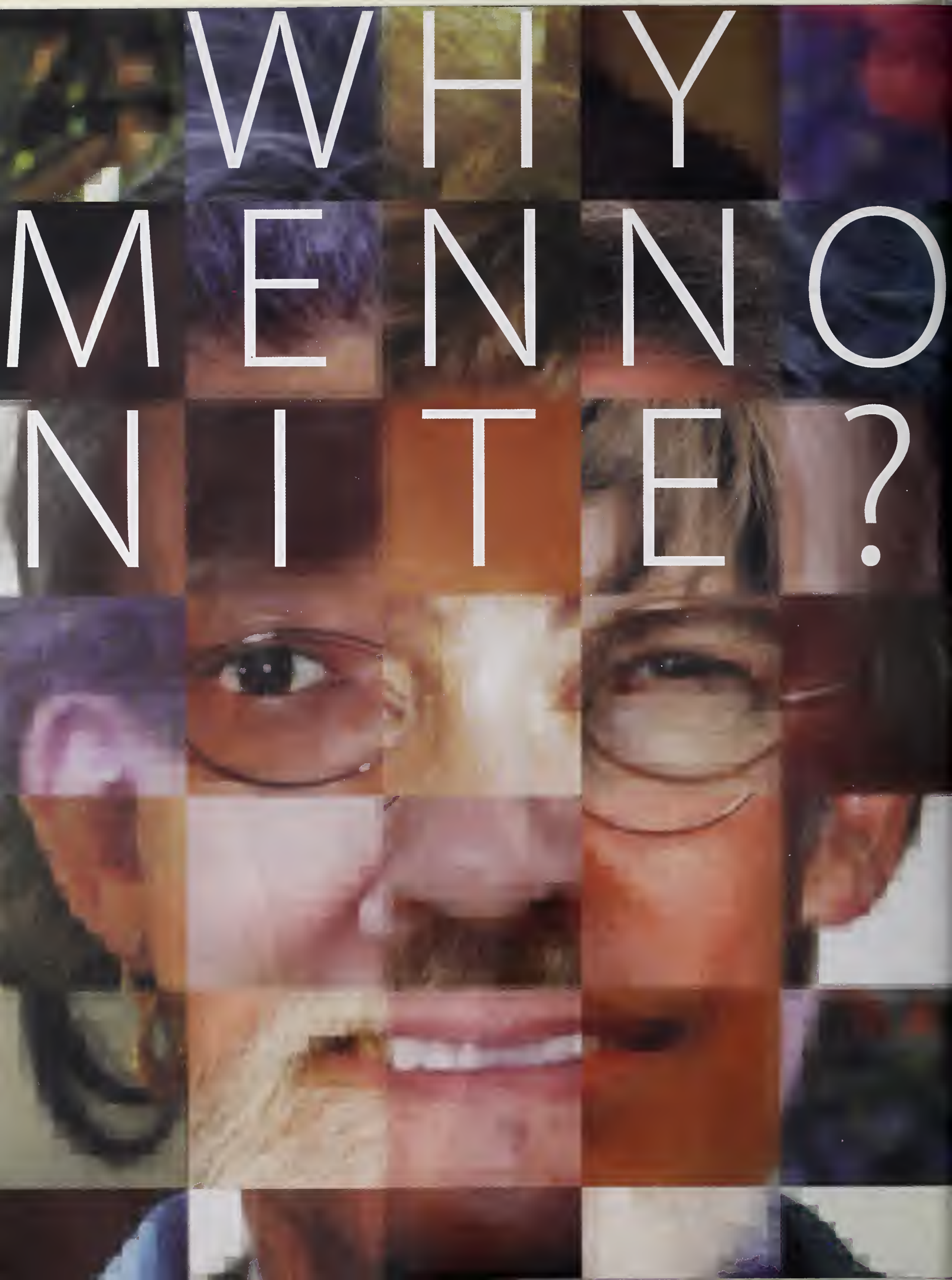
Unemployment is a time of considerable doing—reading classifieds, searching the Internet, sending out resumes, going to interviews. But is it a time of being? Should it be? Can it be? I struggle to believe this, yet my worth depends on it.

If I consider God truly to be the one who can or cannot give me value and worth and significance, it should not matter where I am employed—or if I am employed.

If I consider God truly to be the one who can or cannot give me value and worth and significance, it should not matter where I am employed—or if I am employed. Certainly being out of work does not pay the bills. But ultimately the One who placed me here has the sole privilege to determine what I am worth. Pardon the grammar, but I want to have value in what I be, not what I do. I want to choose to receive this exclusively from God as the Source. My challenge is to accept this and let it be.

John Ratigan is a member of Faith Mennonite Church, Minneapolis.

WHY MENNONITE?



Mennonites share basic core convictions, carried on from the Anabaptist movement.

by Ted Grimsrud

The first members of the Anabaptist churches in the 16th century chose to join that movement. Then severe persecution had a huge impact—many of the first generation even lost their lives. In time, for most of the Anabaptists' spiritual descendants, the Mennonites, ongoing viability depended much more on retaining the children of the church than on gaining new converts from outside.

The survival of the Mennonite tradition depended on a change from their initial belief. From the first, they believed in the baptism of choosing adults—this separated them from other Christians who baptized infants. Later the practical focus was more on the community sustaining itself mainly by keeping its young people from choosing to leave.

For a long time, Mennonites differed a great deal from the surrounding society (most obviously by speaking a different language). So their young people rarely felt comfortable leaving—the shock was too great.

A number of years ago I became acquainted with a Hutterite community where the people mostly spoke German, where they were different from those of us on the outside. A few young people chose to leave, though. They called them runaways. Most of these runaways headed to a nearby city. When they got there, they felt lost, like fish out of water. They tended to congregate with other runaways, and in time most headed back to the Hutterite communities.

For mainstream Mennonites in the United States, those days are long gone. More than ever since the 16th century, Mennonites must choose to stay in the church. Our continued identification with this community is a choice. Hence the ongoing viability of the Mennonite tradition cannot be taken for granted.

The viability of the Mennonite tradition depends on Mennonite churches self-consciously embodying core Mennonite convictions. What are several of the basic convictions that are distinctively Mennonite? What is it we are choosing when we choose to identify ourselves as Mennonite?

In reflecting on these questions, I need to make clear that Mennonites have a great deal in common with other Christians that is important. Many basic Mennonite convictions are also basic Christian convictions. I focus here on distinctive convictions (recognizing also that Mennonites are not necessarily unique in these convictions).

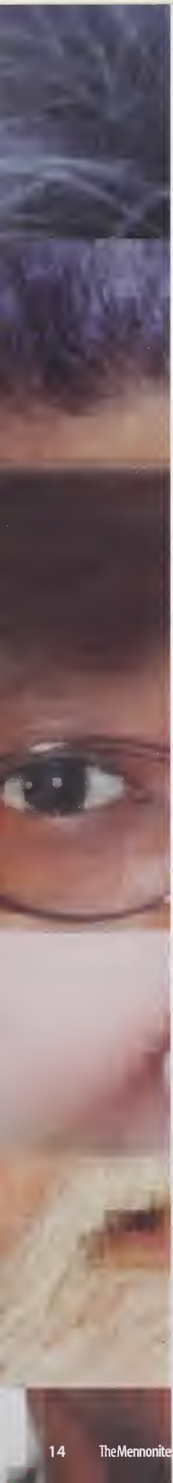
1. Mennonite faith seeks to hold belief and ethics together. The Letter of James puts it famously, "Faith without works is dead." So did early Anabaptist leader Hans Denck, "No one may know Christ unless one follows him in life." As I read Mennonite theology, I don't always find myself in complete agreement with many things, but shining through from 1525 to 2004 is the conviction that you can never separate beliefs from practices—authentic theology must be on-the-ground theology; authentic theology must be lived theology.

Authentic theology must be on-the-ground theology; authentic theology must be lived theology.

2. Mennonite faith explicitly affirms pacifism as central to Christianity. This is commonly understood, but to me the word "explicitly" is crucial—Mennonite faith explicitly affirms pacifism. I have found myself on numerous occasions over the years in conversations with people who, when I identify myself as a Mennonite, immediately bring up the Mennonite peace testimony—not always with affirmation but always in a way that opens the door for direct conversation about peace and about following Jesus.

3. Mennonite faith seeks for its pacifism to express itself in practical works of service. That is to say, Mennonite pacifism over the centuries has cared a lot more about finding ways to put into practice the ethic of love, about finding concrete ways to serve,

Continued on page 14



Continued from page 13

about meeting human needs and has focused more on acting than on developing sophisticated arguments. As John Howard Yoder stated, convictions that foster faithful living matter more than developing intellectualized arguments.

4. Mennonite faith understands commitments to particular nation-states to be secondary and affirms a strong international awareness. Back in the 16th century, Anabaptist leader Michael Sattler was executed for saying that he would refuse to defend Europe against the Turks with violence. Throughout their history, Mennonites have picked up and migrated to new locations when they have been prevented from practicing their faith. They have had the conviction that their loyalty to their faith community as an expression of the coming kingdom of God is a higher loyalty than their commitment to any human government.

5. Mennonite faith fosters active participation of all people in the fellowship, thus decentralizing power. This is an ideal that has not always been met, but the belief in the priesthood of all believers, that we are all on the same level before God, logically points in the direction of sharing power.

These core convictions of Mennonite faith—on-the-ground faith, the commitment to pacifism, service, open participation in community life, following Jesus—are best understood as responses to God's love, not means to gain favor with God.

The central distinctive Mennonite conviction is the first one, the commitment to holding belief and practice together. In the Mennonite tradition, the key word has been "following." Mennonites' faith does not focus on the "mysteries" or on abstract creeds or on the sacraments so much as listening to Jesus' teaching and seeking to walk in his way.

It has been said that when approaching the Bible, Mennonites tend to start with Jesus' Sermon on the Mount—in contrast with, say, Lutherans beginning with Paul's Letter to the Romans or Catholics beginning with the Gospel of John. The differences among these three traditions to a large extent stem from their varied starting points.

The Mennonite approach of making the Sermon on the Mount teaching central to Christian faith reflects two key beliefs: (1) that Jesus' life and teaching provide the basis for understanding the rest of the Bible and, indeed, all of life; and (2) that it is possible to obey, it is possible to follow Jesus' way.

The conviction that Jesus' life and teaching provide the key to understanding everything else stands in contrast to ways creedal Christianity tends to jump from the Virgin Birth to the crucifixion (for example, see the Apostle's Creed: "We believe in Jesus Christ ... who was ... born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified ... [and] rose again"—with nothing about what happened between Mary and Pilate).

The hopeful conviction that it is possible to obey Jesus, that God expects people of faith to embody Jesus' way and that we are able to do so contrasts with the pessimism about human possibilities that has characterized much of Western Christendom, at least since the fourth century. Mennonites believe all Christians should be held to a high standard of ethical faithfulness and that such a standard may realistically be met by all who seek to, with each other's help.

These core convictions of Mennonite faith—on-the-ground faith, the commitment to pacifism, service, open participation in community life, following Jesus—are best understood as responses to God's love, not means to gain favor with God. Because God loves us, we respond with faithful living.

How then do we sustain Mennonite faith? One key is to recognize how much it depends on choices made by the rising generation of young people. We must simply, genuinely love our children and communicate to them a sense of the vitality of following the way of Jesus. We must seek to live as disciples in a way that respects the spiritual responsibilities of each person and encourages all toward self-conscious choices to walk Jesus' path.

The point then becomes that our children join us in the Mennonite community not out of obligation, not out of fear of what might happen if they do otherwise, but out of a free desire to share life in this life-enhancing environment. This means we ourselves must work together to make our Mennonite communities genuinely life enhancing.

As we foster genuinely life-enhancing Mennonite communities that welcome our own children, surely we will also attract others from the outside. These newcomers will be attracted because of our embodiment of Mennonite convictions and will be assets in sustaining our tradition.

Ted Grimsrud teaches theology at Eastern Mennonite University, is an ordained minister in Mennonite Church USA, and is a member of Shalom Mennonite Congregation.

The slaughter of the innocents

by Nina Forsythe

Of course the glory couldn't last—
the shepherds had to get back to work,
the angels to let the night be,
the Hallelujahs to fade with the soggy dew
as even God slept in the fodder—

but such swollen rivers of blood,
such hopeless keening
and outrage. …
It seems almost shameful
to run off to Egypt.
Much better to call it all off,
or die in solidarity.

But it's always death in the end,
even for him, and he walked often enough
in that river.

You have to believe it's worth it,
all the Herods, petty and spectacular,
letting blood slowly through the ear or
hacking throats and limbs in ecstatic frenzy—
you have to have an inscrutable heart
to listen to those anguished cries
and carry on.

Nina Forsythe lives in Sioux City, Iowa.

Psalm 2

by Amy Spencer

'The Lord is my shepherd.'*

He's the only protection I have. He's the one who gets me where I'm going and steers me away from those treacherous cliffs. He's the one who warns me—"Don't stray so close to the edge"—and smiles and laughs at my sheepyness. "Come along," he says, "follow me." And so we go … together.

'I shall not be in want.'

Won't need a thing. Jesus is everything I need. And he provides everything I need. Food and clothes aren't so important to me now. Making sure my insurance is paid up and my hair is combed and my children are happy—these things are no longer just up to me. I'm not in this life alone.

'He makes me lie down in green pastures.'

Bedded down, resting in warm, safe comfort, I am surely a satiated sheep. Everything I need is right here. The green, green grass of the wide, wide field for eating and for wandering in. Baa. The warm sun. Baa. And the protection of this good and watchful shepherd. Baa. And look at my fellow sheep all around me, the flock of his care. Baa baa!

'He leads me beside quiet waters.'

Jesus takes my hand and guides me on a walk along the bank of a shallow stream. Listen, can you hear it—this long, brown sliver of water that has torn its way across the countryside? After a storm, its waters crash on rocks and run over banks, etching the stream deeper into the pasture. But today it whispers. Whispering wishes of good will. Softly giggling as it slowly runs downstream. Swishing its greeting: All is well, all is well, all is well when Jesus leads you along my quiet waters.

'He restores my soul.'

Beaten down, my soul had forgotten how to stand up straight and tall. It slumped. But God invigorated me with his Word. Made me sit up and take notice that there is more than just this.

Adrift, my soul had lost its mooring; it was pushed out to sea by an undertow of doubt and fear, away from the safe coast. But God pulled me back to shore and tied my boat to the dock—stilled the waves of my fretful thoughts, replaced them with calm resolution.

Exhausted, my soul had lost its ability to believe anything at all. But suddenly Jesus came and gave me a good night's sleep, a sudden change of heart, a sudden turn of mind, a wide open pasture straight ahead.

'He guides me in paths of righteousness.'

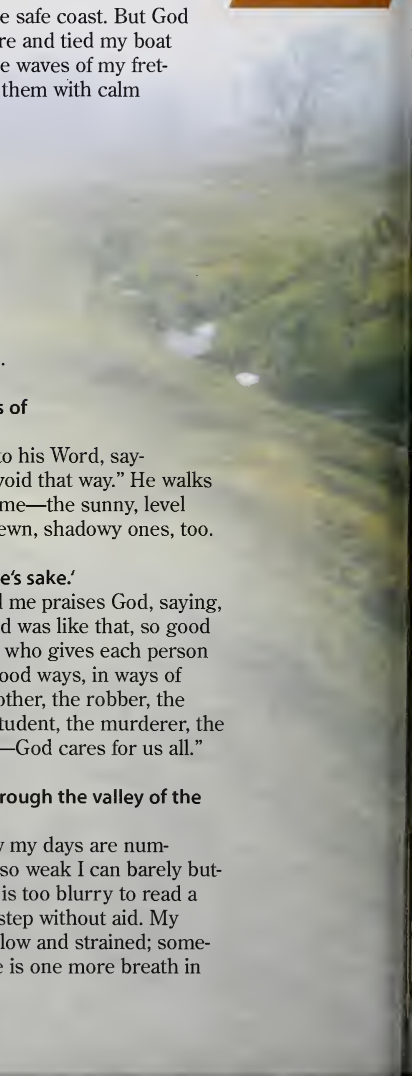
He makes me true to his Word, saying, "Go this way … avoid that way." He walks onto those paths with me—the sunny, level paths and the rock-strewn, shadowy ones, too.

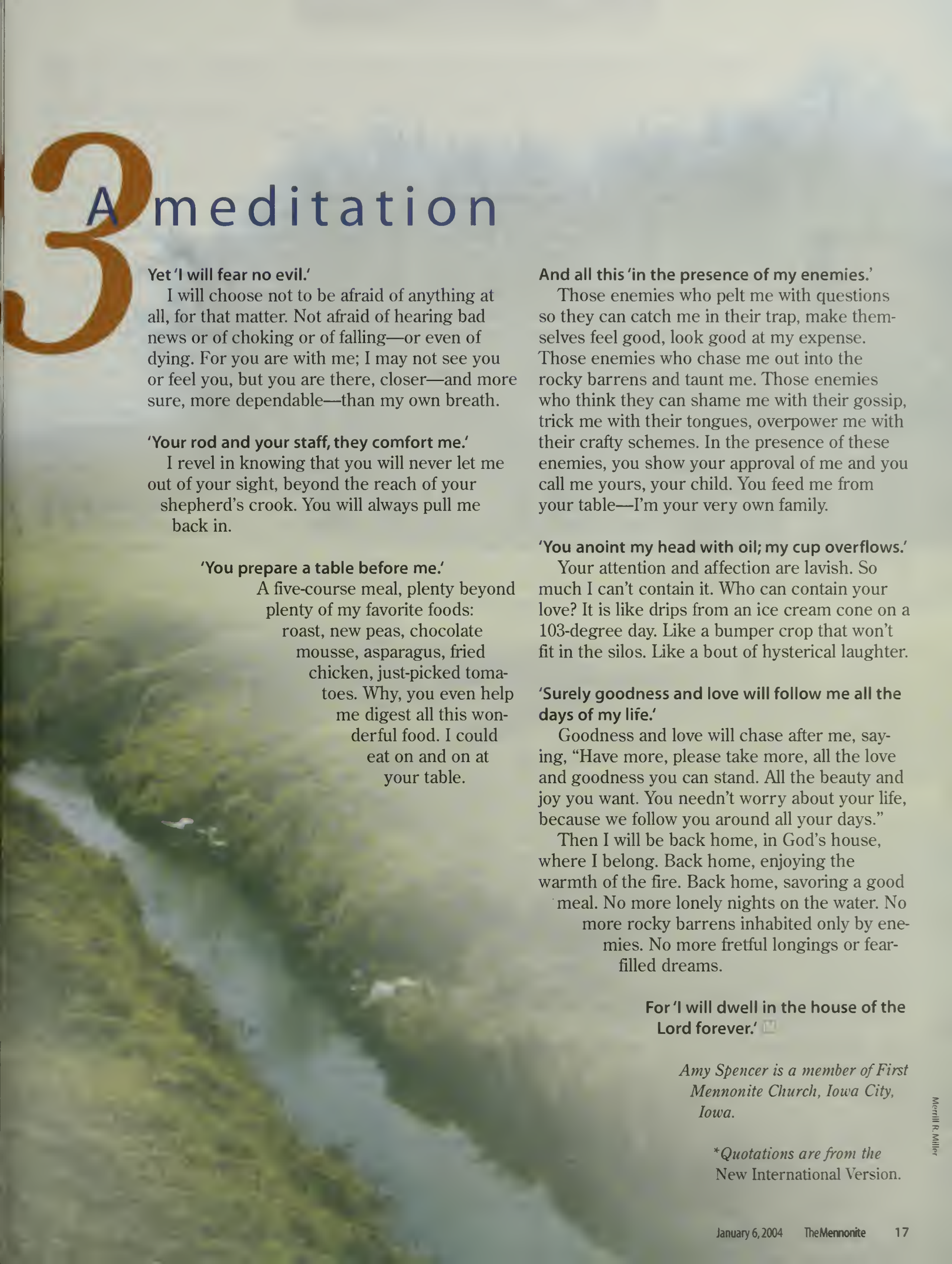
And why? 'For his name's sake.'

So everyone around me praises God, saying, "We never realized God was like that, so good and so pure. This God who gives each person the ability to walk in good ways, in ways of righteousness. The mother, the robber, the child, the infirm, the student, the murderer, the doctor, the tormented—God cares for us all."

'Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.'

Even though I know my days are numbered—my hands are so weak I can barely button a button; my sight is too blurry to read a word. I cannot walk a step without aid. My breath is growing shallow and strained; sometimes I wonder if there is one more breath in me.





Merrill R. Miller

3

A meditation

Yet 'I will fear no evil.'

I will choose not to be afraid of anything at all, for that matter. Not afraid of hearing bad news or of choking or of falling—or even of dying. For you are with me; I may not see you or feel you, but you are there, closer—and more sure, more dependable—than my own breath.

'Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.'

I revel in knowing that you will never let me out of your sight, beyond the reach of your shepherd's crook. You will always pull me back in.

'You prepare a table before me.'

A five-course meal, plenty beyond plenty of my favorite foods: roast, new peas, chocolate mousse, asparagus, fried chicken, just-picked tomatoes. Why, you even help me digest all this wonderful food. I could eat on and on at your table.

And all this 'in the presence of my enemies.'

Those enemies who pelt me with questions so they can catch me in their trap, make themselves feel good, look good at my expense. Those enemies who chase me out into the rocky barrens and taunt me. Those enemies who think they can shame me with their gossip, trick me with their tongues, overpower me with their crafty schemes. In the presence of these enemies, you show your approval of me and you call me yours, your child. You feed me from your table—I'm your very own family.

'You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.'

Your attention and affection are lavish. So much I can't contain it. Who can contain your love? It is like drips from an ice cream cone on a 103-degree day. Like a bumper crop that won't fit in the silos. Like a bout of hysterical laughter.

'Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life.'

Goodness and love will chase after me, saying, "Have more, please take more, all the love and goodness you can stand. All the beauty and joy you want. You needn't worry about your life, because we follow you around all your days."

Then I will be back home, in God's house, where I belong. Back home, enjoying the warmth of the fire. Back home, savoring a good meal. No more lonely nights on the water. No more rocky barrens inhabited only by enemies. No more fretful longings or fear-filled dreams.

For 'I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.'

Amy Spencer is a member of First Mennonite Church, Iowa City, Iowa.

**Quotations are from the* New International Version.

The hard work of pursuing peace in Iraq

Bill Janzen is director of the Ottawa Office for Mennonite Central Committee Canada. This article is adapted from an article for *Canadian Mennonite*.

Would that the stated hopes of U.S. leaders were borne out, that the capture of Saddam Hussein led to a decline in violence in Iraq, that the different groups became more cooperative both with the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and with each other, and that the country was moving more steadily toward peace and prosperity.

To a large extent those are the hopes of many Iraqis. When I was privileged to visit there last September, I was struck by their hope for basics: for a steady flow of water and electricity, for functioning schools and hospitals, for security in their streets and neighborhoods, for mutual understanding among the different ethnic and religious groups, for social and economic opportunities, for freedom to discuss public issues, and for an accountable government.

These were important elements in the people's hope for peace. But by the time of our visit—five months after the overthrow of the Saddam Hussein government—they knew these hopes would not be easily fulfilled. They had been shocked that U.S. troops had stood by during the looting right after the war, which had done more damage than the bombing, both physically and in the destruction of all kinds of records needed to administer the country. They had been shocked again when the CPA had dismissed all 400,000 members of the Iraqi military, thereby causing humiliation and economic hardship. They could not understand how the United States, with all its strength, could not ensure better police and utility services. They worried about how long-term U.S. interests would affect Iraq, about the United States' more privatized approach to the economy, about the emergence of a new poverty and whether the different groups in Iraqi society would find a way of living together.

What stood out for me was that the United States, in its focus on a military victory, had left so many things necessary for peace unaddressed. I was reminded of the phrase "the unrealism of militarism" Frank H. Epp once used in arguing that in reality many wars are massive failures. In this case the Defense Department was given a free hand, disregarding serious concerns of people in the State Department. The United Nations, despite the success of its Security Council in getting weapons inspectors into Iraq, was overruled, as were the pleas of friendly countries. Also the anti-American feelings in the region were not taken seriously. Though once welcomed as a friend, the United States had come to be seen as "buying off" Arab governments to prevent Soviet expansionism, ensure access to oil and protect the state of Israel. Some of the resulting negative feelings were expressed in nationalist movements; others in political Islam. Either way, there were strong suspicions alongside the welcome of U.S. help in the liberation from Saddam Hussein's brutal rule.

To critique the U.S. approach is not to say that U.S. administrators in Iraq are not doing any good. Many, no doubt, are doing their best under the circumstances. They can take some credit that rehabilitation work on infrastructure relating to water, sewage, electricity, oil, irrigation, transportation, communications, education and other needs is moving forward, though some reports say the progress is due more to Iraqi resourcefulness. Neither does this critique imply that the United States is to blame for all problems in Iraq, such as the tensions between Shia and Sunni who, though forming less than 25 percent of the population, have had more power for a century. Neither does this critique minimize the harshness of Saddam Hussein's rule. Some Iraqis have criticized western NGOs that, in the 1990s, strongly opposed the sanctions against Iraq but said little about Hussein's brutality. That he will now be held accountable is a good thing.

However, this critique does mean that the strong faith in massive military action as a means to peace and security is tragically misplaced. The $400 billion in the U.S. Defense Department—equal to that of any 25 other countries—is an enormous misallocation of resources. This critique is also directed at the readiness to go it alone, whether that means ignoring other countries at the U.N. or ordinary people on the ground in Iraq. Ultimately we will not gain our own security if we do not also seek the security and well-being of others. There is much that is good about the United States from which the world can benefit, but it needs a different approach. Recently Daryl Byler, the director of the Mennonite Central Committee Washington Office, wrote to President Bush and urged him to reflect on how the call in Micah 6:8 to "do justice, love kindness and to walk humbly with your God" might reshape his policy on Iraq. Such a reshaping would be hard work, yet it might also yield a more lasting peace. TM

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- **Mennonite mitzvah**—Carolyn Voth
- **The hidden treasure**—Randy Good

50 years after its inception, MEDA work still spawns new projects in Paraguay

Fifty years ago, Mennonite Economic Development Associates got its start by helping launch new business enterprises in Paraguay. Today the same spirit of entrepreneurial compassion is at work in MEDA Paraguay, which is made up of 50 to 60 Mennonite businesspeople who are using their initiative and resources to create new economic opportunity for their neighbors.

Foremost in their work is a plan to replicate a starch manufacturing facility they set up four years ago in eastern Paraguay. That plant, called CODIPSA, was designed to provide a market for several hundred subsistence manioc farmers. Manioc, a common plant with large tubers, is a staple food for the indigenous population but also produces a high quality starch that is preferable in some applications to starch made from corn or potatoes.

The starch plant represented a unique partnership. Some $225,000, half the plant's equity, was made up of investments from local Mennonite businesspeople and an $85,000 donation to MEDA Paraguay from a Rotary Club in Winnipeg. MEDA's Sarona Global Investment Fund added $212,000, and the Denver MEDA chapter provided a loan of $225,000.

While the plant has had its ups and downs with erratic world markets and currency devaluations, it is seen as a highly successful way to help provide a market for smallholder manioc producers (those whose farms are smaller than 10 or 15 acres). Sales in 2002 reached 5.5 million kilograms (worth $650,000), more than triple the previous year, and CODIPSA was able to pay local farmers three times as much money as the year before.

MEDA Paraguay is now looking at building a second plant in another region, says Kurt Falk, secretary of the organization. "We're doing the basic research on the business plan for another plant the same size," he says. "We estimate it will cost about $900,000."

The location has not yet been determined, but it will be in a region where there are many small farmers. One factory needs about 3,000 acres of manioc to reach efficient capacity. Long-distance trucking to the existing plant is not an option because of the heavy weight of manioc in its raw form.

The current factory is served by an association of 650 farmers and their families. "The new one will be similar, probably 600 to 800 farmers," Falk says.

The association, an independent body developed by a "friendship circle" of Mennonites interested in economic improvement, provides an integrated program of agricultural technical support and social services such as health-care assistance.

MEDA Paraguay is looking at two additional new developments. One is to explore commercial production of stevia, a native plant that is many times sweeter than sugar and contains some medicinal nutrients as well. Although stevia originates in Paraguay, other countries have been faster to seize its potential. China is growing more than 62,500 acres of it, and Japan is already using it in diet cola, Falk says.

MEDA Paraguay also has formed a related company to grow demonstration plots of stevia and research its possibilities. The substance, made by grinding the leaves of the plant, is a green powder some Paraguayans call the "green gold" of the future.

MEDA Chaco, a new chapter of MEDA Paraguay that was formed in late August, is working on charcoal production. Farmers are clearing bush to make pasture land, and the wood is being converted to charcoal and exported to Europe, where it is still the preferred barbecue fuel. Falk says the bush clearing is an inevitable fact of life in Paraguay, and the charcoal project at least makes sure that the wood is not wasted but put to good use, creating jobs and income at the same time.—*Wally Kroeker of MEDA News Service*

Paraguay's president requests help from fellow Mennonites

The President of Paraguay has invited the Mennonite business leaders in his predominantly Roman Catholic country to work with him on a "war on corruption," says a pastor of the Mennonite Brethren congregation that he attends.

Nicanor Duarte Frutos attends Rooths Mennonite Brethren Church in Asunción when his schedule and responsibilities allow, according to pastor Victor Wall. The First Lady, Maria Gloria Penayo de Duarte Frutos, is a member, as is the couple's 18-year-old son. The family's four younger children participate regularly in Sunday school and youth activities.

"We try everything to relate closely to these people so that they do not have to be alone," Wall says.

The First Lady, a former Roman Catholic, was a member of Rooths' second group of converts. The Spanish-speaking congregation was founded seven years ago as an expansion of the German-speaking Mennonite Brethren congregation in Asunción. Membership is 163, but attendance spikes as high as 600 for special events such as baptism.

A November 2003 baptism service included the baptism of one of the President's cabinet members.

The First Lady recently sent a letter of blessing to Mennonite World Conference. "We pray for God's blessing of your world conference and that the unity among Mennonites all over the world may be strengthened," she wrote.—*MWC News Service*

Girls are going to school for the first time in the history of their 200-year-old village, thanks to financial support by Friends of the Uzbek, a mission partnership of Lancaster Conference congregations and Eastern Mennonite Missions.

EMM photo by Jo Ann Mast

Lancaster partnership promotes mission and learns Central Asian geography

Ever heard of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan or Turkmenistan? Even those who thought they knew world geography scratch their heads when it comes to "the Stans" of Central Asia.

But when two Mennonite families from the same district of churches felt God leading them to work in Central Asia, Friends of the Uzbek, a mission partnership based in the Manor District, was born.

It wasn't easy, of course. No birth is. But thanks to the visionary leadership of bishop Nathan Showalter, pastor Dick Landis of Living Hope Community Church and Glenn Kauffman, EMM area representative to Asia and Australia, a new partnership of individuals and churches is helping direct prayer, finances and outreach to the Uzbek peoples of Central Asia.

The Friends of the Uzbek congregations in and around Millersville, Pa., now know where "the Stans" are. And they're also learning what life is like in Central Asia. Landis, chair of Friends of the Uzbek, visited Central Asia last year. While traveling with Glenn Kauffman and an EMM worker based in the region, Landis was so impressed with the development and literacy work being done among Afghan refugees and others that he immediately pledged $5,000 to be given within the next 30 days and another $5,000 the following month.

Back in the United States, Landis shared the needs and vision with Friends of the Uzbek as well as other people and congregations in the EMM network.

At Living Hope, a children's leader constructed a small school building for each $5 raised and soon had a whole chain of little schools stretching across the front of the church.

Amazingly, the Afghan appeal brought in $64,000—generosity that deeply impressed EMM partners in the region. One commented, "People come. They say they want to help, but we never hear from them again."

The original goal of the Afghan project ii the immediate aftermath of the war had been to raise funds for simple items such as pencils, blackboards and soccer balls, but these additional funds from Friends of the Uzbek meant that workers could build complete schools, produce reading materials, drill wells and hire teachers.

Money from the Friends of the Uzbek gift helped print the first easy readers designed specifically for local women. *In My Garden* tells the simple story of fruits, vegetables and flowers found in a typical Central Asian garden.

Last year in one village, parents and children worked together making sun-dried clay bricks for the walls of their new school. This year, when the school opened, girls were permitted to attend for the first time in the history of the 200-year-old village.

EMM partners are also working to supply clean water in Afghanistan. Friends of Uzbek funds were used to drill a well and install a closed pump at the school to provide safe drinking water for both students and others in the nearby village.

"Having the Friends of the Uzbek group behind the work in Central Asia has been a tremendous asset," Kauffman says. "It feels so solid. And it's also a two-way street. The Manor District now knows where to find 'the Stans.' "—*Jewel Showalter of EMM News Service*

Having the Friends of the Uzbek group behind the work in Central Asia has been a tremendous asset.
—Glenn Kauffman

The Mennonite cuts staff positions as subscriptions, advertising decline

With less income from subscriptions and advertising in 2003, *The Mennonite* will reduce its staff and centralize more of its operations in Goshen, Ind., in the new year.

Beginning Feb 1., the position of news editor currently held by Rich Preheim will be terminated. Preheim has been associate editor for *The Mennonite* since its inception in 1998. Marla Cole will reduce her time as marketing manager by 20 percent.

Beginning with the Feb. 17 issue, the editorial team for *The Mennonite* will consist of an editor and an associate editor, each full-time. Gordon Houser will move from 80 percent to full-time. Houser will assist editor Everett J. Thomas in the duties now carried by Preheim.

In December 2003, the board of directors of *The Mennonite,* approved a preliminary budget for fiscal year 2004-05 that reduces personnel costs by 19 percent. The new budget anticipates income of $636,200 and expenses of $615,602, leaving a balance of $20,598.

"These financial realities have come about mostly through the loss of subscriptions resulting from the merger and its aftermath," says board chair Joe Roos, Hyattsville, Md., "and the board's directive to [the editor] to create budgets that generate significant net revenue, not just a breakeven budget."

The board's directives came in response to a report from Thomas that showed *The Mennonite* concluded its 2002-03 fiscal year with a net loss in assets of $14,468. While *The Mennonite* increased subscription prices in anticipation of reduced circulation in 2003, advertising income declined unexpectedly in the last half of the year.

"I project that we will end this fiscal year on Jan. 31 close to breakeven or with a small margin [of profit]," Thomas says. "Unfortunately, some of our production costs are rising, and we cannot seem to reverse the downward trend in circulation, even though readership is going up."

A survey of readers last year showed that the number of people who read each issue of *The Mennonite* increased significantly. While readership in 2002 was approximately 26,400, in 2003 it increased to nearly 28,000. At the same time, however, paid circulation dropped from 15,126 in 2002 to 14,301 in 2003.

"We are glad more people are reading *The Mennonite*," Thomas says, "but apparently an increasing number of our subscribers are sharing their copies of the magazine with other folks. Increased readership makes our advertisers happy, but it doesn't help our subscription income."

In addition to reducing editorial and marketing staff time, *The Mennonite* will also centralize its bookkeeping and accounting operations in Goshen. Currently this work is being done by contract in Newton, Kan., and Scottdale, Pa.

EMU expands trauma program to NYC

Eastern Mennonite University's (EMU) STAR (Seminars on Trauma Awareness and Recovery) program has expanded from the school's Harrisonburg, Va., campus to New York City.

STAR is a joint program of Church World Service (CWS) and EMU. It was created in the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001, to assist religious leaders and caregivers in congregations and communities affected by the trauma of this event and its after-effects. Five-day workshops are offered monthly for up to 20 participants, 16 from the United States and four from conflict areas overseas. The first seminar was held in February 2002.

The program expansion, including the two half-time positions, will be funded by a $1 million grant renewal from CWS.

STAR NYC "will coordinate and follow up trainings in the metropolitan New York area and surrounding region and provide information, referral and/or coaching to STAR alumni and their communities on trauma-peacebuilding activities and projects," says STAR program director Carolyn E. Yoder.

The staff members for STAR NYC are Brenda Anita Boyd Bell and Ruth Yoder Wenger, both city residents. Bell is president and chief executive officer of Chrysallis Empowerment and Transformation, a professional and educational consulting firm. She is an ordained minister in the United Church of Jesus Christ-Apostolic and has taught at Queens College, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York City Technical College, College of New Rochelle and Columbia University. She has a master's degree in modern literature from Brooklyn College (CUNY) and a doctorate in literature from Cornell University.

Wenger is pastor of North Bronx Mennonite Church and was recently named moderator of the New York City Council of Churches. She has a consulting ministry that provides individual spiritual direction and workshops in staff development, conflict transformation and spirituality in the workplace. Most recently she acted as project manager for the Restoring Hope Project, the post-9/11 response operated by Mennonite Disaster Service in the city. She is an EMU graduate and earned a master's degree from Columbia University Teachers College.

Bell

Wenger

Mentoring brings new leaders to church

Efforts part of Mennonite Church USA's 'cultivating a culture of call.'

Mennonite Church USA

Marlene Frankenfield and Carlie Frederick

It's not what Marlene Frankenfield said to Carlie Frederick that drew the 21-year-old into a youth ministry internship with Frankenfield. It wasn't anything Frankenfield did, even though as youth minister for Franconia Conference and campus pastor at Christopher Dock Mennonite High School in Lansdale, Pa., she is well aware of the need for shoulder-tapping.

It's simply who Frankenfield is and who she is helping Frederick become, the intern said. Frederick is from a broken home and became a Christian only 5fi years ago. But because Frankenfield and others have befriended her and believed in her, Frederick is sharing her faith and helping young people to grow in theirs.

Mentors such as Frankenfield are drawing young adults and people of all ages into pastoral ministry, as Mennonite Church USA focuses on "cultivating a culture of call." Becoming more intentional about this calling is helping fill an ever-increasing need for a generation of new leaders such as Frederick.

"The biggest joy of all is having someone who believes in me and who won't give up on me," says Frederick, a senior at Eastern University in St. Davids, Pa., who will graduate in May with a major in youth ministry and a minor in psychology. "She's not a supervisor but a friend. We hang out and talk about deep personal things. She's shown me who Jesus is by actions, not words. And she's there to point out blind spots and my gifts."

Frankenfield has given Frederick opportunities to discover her gifts and freedom to risk. Frederick helped plan chapels at Christopher Dock, taught Bible studies and led a seminar and worship at a youth leaders' retreat. This winter, she will complete her internship at Plains Mennonite Church in Lansdale.

Frankenfield and Frederick aren't the only ones across Mennonite Church USA forging supportive relationships. The denomination's priority of "cultivating a culture of call" is helping leaders and laity be more intentional in identifying, mentoring and training new leaders, says Keith Harder, co-director of Mennonite Church USA Executive Board's Office of Ministerial Leadership, which is focusing these efforts. Mennonite Church USA, like many denominations, needs new pastoral leaders to replace a shrinking pool of candidates. The denomination is striving to make strong leadership not only a priority but also a reality that is shaping the church, Harder says.

"I hear of increased awareness in area conferences, congregations and schools about the importance of encouraging people to consider pastoral ministry and experimenting with different things to get this on the agenda of their organizations," he says. "I hear of pastors who are encouraging people to try out ministry in the congregation. I hear of congregations finding new ways to encourage people—young, old and middle-aged—and to provide financial support for students. And I hear of people leaving jobs, like a doctor who recently left his practice to enroll in the Hesston (Kan.) College pastoral ministry program."

A group of about 50 "call ambassadors" are inspiring congregations and other organizations and schools to be more intentional. Call ambassadors include area conference leaders, denominational staff, pastors, educators and churchwide agency personnel commissioned to keep this culture alive and well in their areas.

Call ambassadors Merv Stoltzfus, conference youth minister for Atlantic Coast Conference, and Dawn Yoder Harms, co-pastor at Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church, recently spoke with a group of retired pastors and spouses. They invited the couples to share call stories, give counsel for how to better tap shoulders and to become mentors.

"When we asked what they saw as obstacles for people considering pastoral ministry, many participants shared their own struggles very candidly," Stoltzfus says. "They said they've seen the pastorate drop in esteem in the last couple of decades.

"Pastors chosen by lot had more grace extended to them, because the congregation gave them time to grow. But with the professional ministry, a pastor is a paid employee and expectations are higher. It's become a lot more about performance."

Despite these concerns, the eagerness of retired pastors to mentor others brought him hope, Stoltzfus says. "These pastors have a lot of energy and wisdom to share with younger people," he says. "Retired pastors can move congregations in ways that younger pastors can't. It holds a lot of weight when a 70-something person encourages a 20-something person."—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Young preacher to hit the road

Road trip will take on a new meaning for a student at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg.

James Peters, who is in his final year of bachelor of theology studies, will be visiting Manitoba congregations to give Sunday morning sermons on the role of young adults in the church. He calls himself a "traveling young adult preacher."

Peters plans to visit eight congregations between January and April.

"[Young adults] not only wish to be part of congregational life but to contribute their numerous gifts in a wide variety of ways," says John Klassen, director of Mennonite Church Manitoba Leadership Ministries.—*Canadian Mennonite*

Deaf instructor offers signs of Christ

U.S. IVEP assignment steered Nigerian to work with people with disabilities.

When Athanasius Dapul left his home in Nigeria in 1982 for a year with the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) International Visitor Exchange Program (IVEP), he didn't know his experiences in the United States would shape the next decades of his life. But that is exactly what happened.

More than 20 years after first working with people with disabilities, Dapul is teaching Bible and religion at the Plateau School for the Deaf in Jos, Nigeria.

Dapul, now an MCC Nigeria worker, credits his work experience as an IVEP participant with sparking his interest in special education. At the Association for the Disabled of Elkhart (Ind.) County, he cared for, ate with and learned from young people with developmental disabilities. "IVEP really opened my eyes," Dapul says. "It opened my heart, too."

After returning to Nigeria, he earned a university diploma in special education as well as a bachelor's degree in Christian education. Now a father of five himself, he has taught at the Plateau School since 1991. He also serves as a guidance counselor.

In a country where education is often limited even for children with no special needs, attendance at the Plateau School is a rare opportunity for deaf children to gain access to the world of knowledge. They learn sign language as well as lip reading and study a full range of subjects. The boarding school, which currently serves 350 students from across Nigeria and receives both government and private support, is also beginning a program for those who are both deaf and blind.

Dapul's goal is to help his students see that they are valuable in God's eyes. Using the story of Jesus and the blind man found in John 9, he assures them that being blind or deaf is not a divine punishment. "Jesus said it's so the name of the Lord can be glorified," Dapul explains. "When they read this passage, they are happy."

MCC photo by Matthew Lester

Teacher and Mennonite Central Committee worker Athanasius Dapul uses sign language to welcome a student to Plateau School for the Deaf in Jos, Nigeria.

Discussing religion with children who are also learning to communicate via sign language for the first time in their lives is also a joyful experience.

"Many of those deaf from birth know there's a God, but until they get here they have no language to describe these ideas and feelings," Dapul says.

He returned to the United States last summer for several months to learn about advances in programs for deaf people and others with disabilities. He spent time at Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Center of Lancaster, Pa., where he learned how to communicate with the deaf and blind. He is now working to introduce new ideas for employment and independent living for his school's graduates.

During his time in the United States, Dapul also visited the day center where he had worked in Elkhart and got reacquainted with former clients—a "wonderful opportunity," he says, to reconnect with the friends who first showed him the gifts that people with disabilities have to contribute.—*Rachel B. Miller Moreland of MCC News Service*

CEE financing congregation's building project

With only one Bible and nestled between two remote mountain ranges, a congregation in Anren, China, thought it might be the only Christian body in existence. Now the congregation has been linked with other believers in the country and beyond.

China Educational Exchange has advanced some funds to the group so it can start constructing a church building, which is required by government officials if the members are to continue to meet.

The congregation has more than 300 baptized members, who meet in the pastor's home. But attendance can swell to 1,000 for special events, rendering their current meeting place inadequate.

Unfortunately, the congregation is desperately poor. The local dialect has no written form, so there is a high rate of illiteracy. To facilitate learning the Bible, Scripture passages have been put to music for easy memorization.

China Educational Exchange is a partnership of Eastern Mennonite Missions, Mennonite Brethren Missions and Service International, Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Mission Network.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

A is for Angola and Afghanistan as MCC sends school kits to devastated countries

With an educational system in tatters after 27 years of civil war, in a country where half of school-age children never even enter the classroom, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) school kits in Angola have brought a needed measure of encouragement.

"The schools really appreciated it. They felt that it was a concrete gesture emphasizing the importance of education," says Krista Rigalo, who as MCC country co-representative saw some of the 10,267 kits distributed in schools near the overcrowded capital of Luanda and two nearby provinces after the current school year began last February.

Rigalo witnessed Angolan Mennonite church leaders explaining to the children that the kits were a gift from brothers and sisters in North America who hope the supplies help students study better. She watched as the kits were broken apart for the vast number of students, each child in grade 3 and below receiving something, whether an eraser, notebook or pencil. It was a bigger priority, leaders decided, that each child receive an item than to keep the kits together.

"There were so many children, and the gesture seemed so important. ... The symbolism of the gift reinforced that education is important," Rigalo says.

In Angola, only half of all school-age children make it to school, Rigalo says. Twenty percent of those will stay to the end of high school. Then, 3 percent of those make it to college.

The civil war has eroded the nation's infrastructure and displaced a third of the population; many have migrated to provincial capitals or settled into squatters' dwellings. Luanda, built for 400,000 people, now has a population of around 6 million in the metro area. Angola's total population is 12 million.

And with a government overwhelmed by the task of rebuilding, educational needs must compete against other needs. Government schools are overcrowded; private schools are expensive. Churches, in essence, are left to take up the slack. Mennonite congregations run schools on their church compounds and have built schools in squatter colonies. "They really are providing education services to the poorest of the poor," Rigalo says.

MCC has also sent 7,500 school kits to Afghanistan, another country whose educational system has been decimated by war and social instability. Help the Afghan Children, MCC's partner in Afghanistan, reports that most children meet in "shelterless" schools: in tents, under trees or the entryways of homes. Where school buildings do exist, the student-to-teacher ratio can reach as high as 200 to 1. In addition to the lack of facilities and teachers, there is a severe shortage of supplies.

"The extent of war and internal conflict over the last two decades has virtually devastated the educational infrastructure of the country," according to Help the Afghan Children.—*MCC News Service*

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WORKERS

Hostetler, Marvin, began Oct. 12 as pastor at Wellman (Iowa) Mennonite Church.

Jansen-Preheim, Lois, was ordained Oct. 5 for her work with the Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Rhodes, Glen, was licensed Nov. 30 as minister of worship and youth of Arthur (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Scoville, Gordon, began Nov. 2 as interim pastor at Beemer (Neb.) Mennonite Church.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bowman, Mackenzie Renee, Oct. 9, to Kayla Bowman, Louisville, Ohio.

Franz, Aaron Michael, July 25, to Michael and Angela Reed Franz, Lincoln, Neb.

Hathaway, Jarrod Michael, Nov. 4, to Ryan and Amy Hammerling Hathaway, Toledo, Ohio.

Hodge, Abigail Carol, Nov. 15, to Leon and Rachel Hodge, Edwardsburg, Mich.

Kasitz, Kyle Daniel, Dec. 3, to Todd and Debbie Epp Kasitz, Wichita, Kan.

Kauffman, Tara Sang Xin, May 26, 2002, received for adoption Nov. 11 by Dave and Sherry Burkholder Kauffman, Columbus, Ohio.

Kennedy, Doran Thomas, Aug. 8, to Thomas and Kristel Wenger Kennedy, Lancaster, Pa.

Kinsinger, Brittany Lynn, Nov. 12, to Jared and Stephanie Benning Kinsinger, Wellman, Iowa.

Kratz, Emma Suzanne, Nov. 18, to J. Randall and Melissa Moyer Kratz, Pennsburg, Pa.

Litwiller, John Timothy, Nov. 21, to Timothy and Jennifer Root Litwiller, Tremont, Ill.

Mast, Emma Grace, Nov. 22, to Joseph and Marie Johnston Mast, Millersburg, Ohio.

Mauzy, Caiden James, Oct. 20, to Darin and Tarah Lasure Mauzy, Las Vegas, Nev.

Moyer, Sarah Anne, Oct. 26, to Vernon and Christina Brendle Moyer, Powhatan, Va.

Myers, Gideon James, Nov. 17, to Keith and Taryn Roynon Myers, Archbold, Ohio.

Nemath, Esther Joyce, Nov. 25, to Glenn and Sandy Szamborski Nemath, North Wales, Pa.

Plock, Alyssa Paige, Aug. 18, to Russell and Mary Franz Plock, Lincoln, Neb.

Saalfrank, Allison Nicole, Nov. 4, to Michael and Lisa Liechty Saalfrank, Perkasie, Pa.

Schloneger, Elliot Vaughn, Nov. 19, to Jeffry and Heather McKee Schloneger, Alliance, Ohio.

Schnacker, Daniel Perry, Nov. 25, to Perry and Janet Thieszen Schnacker, Shawnee, Kan.

Shelley, Roselyn Marie, Nov. 1, to James and Michelle Tracey Shelley, South Bend, Ind.

Stoltzfus, Heidi Roeann, Nov. 21, to Jeff and Rhonda Stoltzfus, Atglen, Pa.

Widmer, Claire Elise, Sept. 11, to Todd and Marcia Widmer, Iowa City, Iowa.

Zehr, Josiah Ray, Oct. 1, to Darwin and Karen Myers Zehr, Perkasie, Pa.

MARRIAGES

Amstutz/Couch: Anita Amstutz, Albuquerque, N.M., and Kenneth Couch, Albuquerque, Sept. 20 at Tepeyac Guesthouse Gardens, Albuquerque.

Croft/Lehman: Lisa Croft, Johnstown, Pa., and Cameron Lehman, Johnstown, Oct. 25 at Stahl Mennonite Church, Johnstown.

Gillespie/Madding: Robert Gillespie, Seville, Ohio, and Janell Madding, Orville, Ohio, Aug. 30 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Rittman, Ohio.

Jones/Lamberjack: Jennifer Jones, Cincinnati, Ohio, and Robert Lamberjack, Acadia, Ohio, Oct. 18 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio.

Martens/Suter: John Martens, Elkhart, Ind., and Marty Suter, Middlebury, Ind., Nov. 29 at Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Martin/Rounds: Jonathan Martin, Springs, Pa., and Miranda Rounds, Accident, Md., Oct. 18 at Glade Mennonite Church, Accident.

McTonic/Thomas: Jamie McTonic, Hollsopple, Pa., and Jeremy Thomas, Hollsopple, Sept. 6 at Stahl Mennonite Church, Johnstown.

Rose/Thompson: Diana Rose, Bath, N.Y., and Shannon Thompson, Bath, Nov. 22 at Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church, Hammondsport, N.Y.

Short/Thomas: Tim Short, Wadsworth, Ohio, and Marian Thomas, Millersburg, Ohio, July 12 at Grace Mennonite Church, Berlin, Ohio.

Wedel/Winsky: Tony Wedel, Moundridge, Kan., and Gina Winsky, Moundridge, Nov. 15 in McPherson, Kan.

DEATHS

Banman, Frieda Schmidt, 98, North Newton, Kan., died Nov. 24. Spouse: Arthur Banman (deceased). Parents: John J. and Elizabeth Rempel Schmidt. Children: Lela Trewett, Marjorie Neufeld, Joan Wiebe; 12 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 29 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Blackham, Alice, 90, Bath, N.Y., died Nov. 23. Spouse: Andrew Blackham (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Irene Stamm Christie. Children: Edmund, Andrew, Frederick; eight grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 26 at Fagan's Funeral Home, Bath.

Blosser, C. Raymond, 79, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 17 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Vada Wenger Blosser. Parents: Russell and Pearl Bollinger Blosser. Children: Illene, Karen Slaven, Cheryl Almager, Randy; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 20 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Bowman, Lillian Axt, 86, Kitchener, Ont., died Dec. 5. Spouse: Stanley Bowman (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Livia Cressman Axt. Child: Cheryl Lowe; seven grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 10 at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener.

Brenneman, Helen, 79, Kitchener, Ont., died Nov. 30. Parents: Christian and Edna Lichti Brenneman. Funeral: Dec. 6 at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener.

Burkholder, Dora M., 98, Archbold, Ohio, died Nov. 16. Parents: Simon and Lovina Helmuth Miller. Children: Robert, Marilyn Yoder, Carol Heimbach; 15 grandchildren; 33 great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 20 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

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Buschman, Lois, 69, Perryton, Texas, died Nov. 13. Spouse: Alvin Buschman. Parents: Morris and Anna Smith. Children: Job, Kit, Tim, Terry, Mark; 16 grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 17 at Perryton Mennonite Church.

Flick, Mary, 72, Bluffton, Ohio, died Nov. 28. Spouse: Robert K. Flick. Parents: Clarence and Leola Williamson. Children: Thomas, Kathy Traucht, Mark; seven grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 1 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Fliginger, Celia Lehmann, 96, Freeman, S.D., died Nov. 17. Spouse: Charley R. Fliginger (deceased). Parents: C.B. (Christian) and Katie Schowalter Lehmann. Children: Betty Schmeichel (deceased), Ardis Wipf, Rita Graber; six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 22 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Friesen, Allen M., 81, Henderson, Neb., died Nov. 26. Spouse: Martha Klippenstein Friesen. Parents: Gerhard J. and Katharina Friesen. Children: Charles, Stuart, Connie Jones, Ross; nine grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 29 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Friesen, Laverna Waltner, 82, Freeman, S.D., died Nov. 23. Spouse: Wilbur Friesen. Parents: Lewis and Bertha Miller Waltner. Children: Ila Mebiua, Nita "Short" Larson; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 26 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Garges, Gladys L., 84, Doylestown, Pa., died Nov. 1. Spouse: Arthur A. Garges. Parents: Earle and Nellie Ward Blauch. Children: Arthur D., Stephen R., Deborah Funk (deceased); four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 5 at Doylestown Mennonite Church.

Gerber, Walter L., 84, Lagrange, Ind., died Nov. 25. Spouse: Anna Miller Gerber (deceased). Parents: John H. and Alta Umstead Gerber. Children: Serena F. Howard, Robert E.; six grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 29 at Emma Mennonite Church, Topeka, Ind.

Gingerich, Ada Kohns, 76, West Jefferson, Ohio, died Oct. 31. Spouse: Joe Kohns (deceased). Parents: Jonas and Catherine Miller Gingerich. Children: Ramona Detweiler, Veronica Johnson, Anthony Joe, Lisa Minshall; 14 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 4 at Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City, Ohio.

Golbek, Adolph J., 79, Wagoner, Okla., died Nov. 20. Parents: John J. and Hannah Wiebe Golbek. Funeral: Nov. 24 at Eden Mennonite Church, Inola, Okla.

Harder, Anna M., 85, Mountain Lake, Minn., died Dec. 4. Spouse: Harry T. Harder (deceased). Parents: Peter B. and Marie Derksen Harder. Children: Martin, Margaret Janzen, Elaine Marie (deceased); four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 8 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake.

Harris, William Richards, 65, Harleysville, Pa., died Nov. 30. Spouse: Mary Ann Leight Harris. Parents: Lyshon Roslyn and Laura Mae Greene Harris. Children: Jennifer Anne, Sarah Elizabeth Harris Quintos, Margaret Laura Harris Longacre. Memorial service: Dec. 5 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville.

Heinrichs, Aganetha "Agnes", 96, Altona, Man., died Nov. 2. Spouse: Diedrich Heinrichs (deceased). Parents: Peter and Helena Wieler Nickel. Children: Elmer, Rod, Harvey, Irene Adams; 11 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 5 at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Hostetler, Chauncey A., 94, Bluffton, Ohio, died Nov. 17. Spouse: Ellen Hostetler (deceased). Parents: Alvin and Mary Hostetler. Children: Thomas, Donald, George, Margaret Bird; three grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 20 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

James, Robert, 63, Plain City, Ohio, died Nov. 4. Spouse: Pauline Nissley James. Parents: Clarence and Naomi Slayton James. Children: Carmela, Sheila Salizzoni, Marla Souders; four grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 7 at Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City.

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Please direct all inquiries and applications to:
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Kulp, Kathryn, 91, Telford, Pa., died Nov. 16. Spouse: John H. Kulp (deceased). Parents: Harry and Ella Heckler. Child: J. Robert; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 21 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Landis, Rebekah L., 90, Lititz, Pa., died Nov. 19. Spouse: John N. Landis (deceased). Parents: Jonathan D. and Sallie Zook Kauffman. Child: Glenn R.; step-daughter Susan Landis. Funeral: Nov. 22 at Landis Valley Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Ramer, Elizbeth Hunsberger, 92, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 24 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Henry Ramer (deceased). Parents: George and Celesta Bear Hunsberger. Children: Marcile, Donald; six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 29 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Ratzlaff, Emma Schroeder, 98, Buhler, Kan., died Nov. 22. Spouse: Edward H. Ratzlaff (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Agnes Warkentin Schroeder. Children: John E., Darlene M. Hein; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 26 at Buhler Mennonite Church.

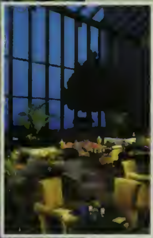
Rice, Owen S., 82, Souderton, Pa., died Oct. 19. Spouse: Mary A. Rice. Parents: Edward and Pearl Rice. Children: Lorraine Stutzman, Mary Ann Kulp, Donna Godshall, Marilyn Landis, Charlotte Myers, Ruth Swartley, Barbara Hackman, Susan Hange, David; 26 grandchildren; 35 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 26 at Deep Run Mennonite Church East, Perkasie, Pa.

Rupright, Rachel Rae, 44, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 15 of cancer. Parents: Harold and Doris Virginia Sultz Rupright. Funeral: Nov. 17 at Yoder-Culp Funeral Home, Goshen.

Schellenberg, Henry R., 73, Altona, Man., died Nov. 17. Spouse: Anne Nickel Schellenberg. Parents: Isaac and Katharina Schellenberg. Children: Ron, Roxanne Dyck, Gerald; five grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 22 at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Schmidt, Olin J., 91, Inman, Kan., died Nov. 28. Spouse: Tillie Nachtigal Schmidt. Parents: Jacob F. and Maria Dyck Schmidt. Children: Joyce Mills, Mary, Wayne; 10 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 1 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman.

Siemens, Gary Dean, 69, Buhler, Kan., died Nov. 23. Spouse: Delores G. Mayer. Parents: Curt and Agatha Franz Siemens. Children: Shawn Laughlin, Cynthia, Sherrie Holdeman, Agatha; one grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 29 at Buhler Mortuary.



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Suter, Grace Fisher, 84, Harrisonburg, Va., died Dec. 8. Spouse: Daniel B. Suter. Parents: Stephen and Lavina Hooley Fisher. Children: Janice S. Showalter, Mary Louise Tierney, David R., Danny B.; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 12 at Detwiler Auditorium, Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, Harrisonburg.

Swartzendruber, Edna, 92, Kalona, Iowa, died Oct. 20. Spouse: Clarence Swartzendruber (deceased). Parents: Joe D. and Annie Yoder. Children: Treva Stutzman-Finks, Verlin, Ardell; nine grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 23 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Thomas, Anna K. Saylor, 90, Hollsopple, Pa., died Nov. 6. Spouse: Harold E. Thomas (deceased). Parents: Edgar and Jennie Saylor. Children: Janet Herr (deceased), Joyce (deceased), Harold, Cynthia Lehman; nine grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 10 at Stahl Mennonite Church, Johnstown, Pa.

Weaver, Harlan M., 83, Lititz, Pa., died Nov. 3. Spouse: Velma I. Esbenshade Weaver. Parents: Aaron G. and Lydia Martin Weaver. Funeral: Nov. 7 at Groffdale Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Wenger, Mary Widmer, 94, Wayland, Iowa, died Nov. 21. Spouse: Raymond Wenger (deceased). Parents: Christian and Elizabeth Widmer. Children: John, Paul, James; nine grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 26 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Witmer, Raymond H., 86, Lititz, Pa., died Nov. 10 of cancer. Spouse: Edith M. Witmer. Children: Les, Gwen Hartzler; five grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 12 at Landis Homes, Lititz.

Yoder, Lydia Detweiler, 72, Perkasie, Pa., died Nov. 19 of cardiopulmonary arrest. Spouse: Clyde Yoder. Parents: Charles and Rachel Derstine Detweiler. Children: Delphine Michels, Galen, Sandra Horst, Gladys Brand, Dean; five grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 22 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Paul Emanuel, 87, Wellman, Iowa, died Nov. 20. Spouse: Helen Slaubaugh Yoder. Parents: John and Nancy Hershey Yoder. Children: Kathleen Erteld, Christine Falcon, Phil C., Orie J.; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 23 at Wellman Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Richard, 57, Arthur, Ill., died Nov. 22. Spouse: Carol Yoder. Parents: Jonas and Rachel Yoder. Child: Shelly Brough; two grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 26 at Arthur Mennonite Church.

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Goshen College is accepting applications for a tenure-track position in *music upper strings.* Responsibilities include applied instruction in violin and viola, chamber music and strings methods. Related areas of teaching may include but not be limited to music theory, music history and music appreciation. Additional teaching in the Community School of the Arts of Goshen College is available. A doctorate is preferred; master's required. Strong interest in and record of successful recruiting is preferred. Candidate should be an active performer and have evidence of successful teaching at the college level. Candidate needs to have a vision for growing a quality program in a state-of-the-art facility. Applications will be reviewed beginning Feb. 1, 2004. The appointment will begin July 1, 2004.

To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, www.goshen.edu/employment. Women and minority persons are especially encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Administrative and teaching faculty members are expected to share this commitment.

Goshen College Education Department is seeking a full-time tenure-track *assistant professor in education* position beginning August 2004. This position will be responsible for oversight of and teaching in the middle school and secondary education programs, both field placements and on-campus courses. This position requires a team player, interested in integrative curriculum and instruction and with skills in administration that could hone and refine middle school and secondary programs. All members of the department work with prospective students, advising and serve on institution-wide committees. Doctorate in education preferred, with a minimum of three years successful teaching experience in 5-12. Candidates should have interest in and proficiency in program development and evaluation as well as teaching, excellent aptitude and ability in teaching and administration, good skills in speaking and writing, public relations and computers.

To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, www.goshen.edu/employment. Women and minority persons are especially encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Administrative and teaching faculty members are expected to share this commitment.

MCC, VNCS and EMM Vietnam alumni are invited to celebrate Mennonite Central Committee's ***50 years of work in Vietnam*** on July 9-11, 2004, in Hanoi, Vietnam. For more information or to register, contact Diane Gehman by email <deg@mcc.org> or by mail at MCC, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501.

Western Mennonite School Board of Directors has announced a search for applicants for the position of *principal* to begin July 2004. Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students both local and at a distance. Located on 45 acres in the Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience with a comprehensive vision for expanding enrollment, program and facilities. Requests for information can be addressed to Search Committee, Western Mennonite School, 9045 Wallace Road NW, Salem, OR 97304; wmsoffice@telelport.com.

Sustainable Farming Conference at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Feb. 27-29. ***"Farming with Values that Last: Family, Community, Land, Faith."*** Come for inspiring speakers, worship, workshops and informal interaction that support sustainable farming. To register contact Laurelville: Email info@laurelville.org, phone 800-839-1021.

Nampa Mennonite Church, an established church in Idaho with a 100-year history and about 100 in regular attendance, is prayerfully seeking a full-time *pastor.* The church is located in a fast-growing area with various outdoor recreational activities nearby. Applicants should have a calling to service in areas of preaching, teaching, evangelism, encouragement and discipleship.

Please contact Everett Earnest, 14678 Woosley Drive, Nampa, ID 83651; phone 208-466-7450; email pastorsearch@nampamennonitechurch.com or esq@access4less.net.

Mennonite Village seeks a *foundation director* with excellent interpersonal and communication skills. Experience in development and fund raising preferred. Contact Ron Litwiller, Mennonite Village, 5353 Columbus St. SE, Albany, OR 97322. Email ron@mennonitevillage.org; Web site: www.mennonitevillage.org.

EMU announces faculty openings in the *education department* beginning Fall 2004.

Special education: Master's degree in education required; Ph.D. in special education or related field preferred. Candidates must have K-12 experience. Responsibilities include classroom teaching in the graduate and undergraduate programs, student advising, student teacher supervision, university service and ongoing scholarship.

Literacy/early childhood education: Master's degree in education required; Ph.D. or A.B.D. in early education, literacy or related field preferred. Candidates must have K-12 experience. Responsibilities include classroom teaching in the graduate and undergraduate programs focusing on emergent literacy, foundations and assessment of literacy, English as a second language, and early childhood education; student advising; student teacher supervision; university service and ongoing scholarship. Candidates should send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts and three references to Marie S. Morris, Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or email ugdean@emu.edu. http://www.emu.edu. Review will begin immediately.

Main education program director, Lancaster, Pa: Provide leadership to MA in education program and teach courses. Ph.D. required. Responsible for vision, marketing, recruitment and candidate advisement. Position open July 2004. Candidates should send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts and three references to Beryl Brubaker, Academic Provost and Graduate Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or email provost@emu.edu. Review will begin immediately.

EMU seeks faculty with evidence or promise of teaching excellence in a Christian, liberal arts environment, committed to ongoing scholarship, who are familiar with and supportive of Anabaptist/Mennonite Christian faith practices. EMU reserves the right to fill the positions at any time or keep the positions open. AAEO employer. Persons who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

Hesston College is seeking a full-time *business instructor* to teach courses in management, marketing, economics and related courses beginning in August 2004. Qualifications include teaching experience, business experience, innovative spirit, love of students and commitment to Mennonite higher education, the Mennonite Church and the mission of Hesston College. Ph.D. or M.B.A. preferred.

Contact Marc Yoder, Academic Dean, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062, marcusy@hesston.edu. Review of applicants will begin Jan. 15 and continue until the position is filled.

Mennonite Central Committee is accepting applications for the position of *MCC Central States executive director.* The director provides vision and oversight for all MCC programs in Central States. Familiarity with MCC constituency, strong relational administrative skills and cultural competency required. Experience with budgeting, administration, Spanish language skills preferred. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply. Significant travel time within the United States.

Contact Charmayne Brubaker, 717-859-1151, cdb@mcc.org, or your nearest MCC office for the full job description. Application review begins February 2004. Position available at that time.

Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio, is seeking candidates for the full-time position of *minister of youth.* Candidates should have strong Anabaptist beliefs and have a passion for children, youth and young adults. Full job description is available by contacting Kelvin Friesen at 419-445-0856 or kelfriesen@rtecexpress.net.

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Tacos and pickles on menu for NCC boycotts

Rich Preheim

More than 15 years after its last endorsement of a boycott, the National Council of Churches is sinking its teeth into Taco Bell and Mount Olive Pickle Company. At its general assembly in November 2003, NCC approved boycotting the two organizations to apply pressure on them to improve wages and working conditions of their suppliers' farm workers.

"Casting our option with the poor is our best action as people of faith," said Lydia Velko of the United Church of Christ. "It's heartening to me to see two farm-worker situations raised up at this particular assembly."

According to NCC News Service, Taco Bell has refused to address exploitation in the fields of its tomato suppliers, particularly Six Ls Packing, one of the largest U.S. tomato growers. The average rate paid to tomato harvesters in 1980 was 40 cents per 32-pound bucket. That same rate is being paid today, earning workers less than half of what they did more than two decades ago in inflation-adjusted dollars.

Workers also lack benefits such as health insurance and overtime pay.

The conditions at Mount Olive, the nation's second-largest processor of pickles and pickle products, have been described as "very difficult, unhealthy and dangerous." Among the charges are low wages, ignored health and safety standards, substandard housing and violations of child-labor laws.

NCC is the largest and broadest U.S. religious body to join the boycotts. The organization last endorsed a boycott in 1998 against Royal Dutch/Shell for its connections to apartheid South Africa.

TIDBITS

On any given Sunday, only 5 percent of Australia's population is in church, usually Anglican or Catholic.—*Holiness Today*

Time is the only one of the three major U.S. weekly news magazines to have a religion expert on its editorial staff. —*The Christian Century*

Thirty-eight percent of Americans say they wouldn't vote for a well-qualified Muslim candidate for President. —*Christianity Today*

Ninety-one percent of Catholics believe their church is less inclined toward evangelism than other faiths.—*U.S. Catholic*

The percentage of Canadian teenagers who identify themselves as mainline Christians has fallen from 22 percent to 8 percent in the last 20 years.—*Presbyterian Record*

Faith and finances (I)

The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends wants to play hardball, putting up a staunch defense in court. And PYM is not playing basketball.

The Internal Revenue Service is threatening PYM with a penalty of more than $20,000 for refusing to garnish the wages of employee and war-tax-resister Priscilla Adams. PYM has decided to challenge the IRS on all possible grounds, including constitutional and statutory religious freedom, reported *Peace Tax Fund Update.*

"This is a conflict between religious convictions and religious freedom and the demands of the state," said Thomas H. Jeavons, general secretary of PYM, which is the central Quaker organization for a four-state area, serving 12,000 members of 104 monthly meetings, or congregations.

Adams has for years refused to pay federal taxes that support the military, and PYM has a policy of supporting employees who, because of conscientious objection to war, resist paying.

Faith and finances (II)

They aren't typical revivals at Mount Carmel Baptist Church in Norfolk, Va. Instead of calling people to life in Christ, pastor C. Verne Russell Jr. calls people to life without debt. In foot-stomping, music-filled evening services, he preaches the virtues of saving and paying cash and paying off credit-card bills.

"The credit-card companies don't like me too well," Russell said in *The Observer.* A glass urn on his pulpit contains the remnants of 10,000 shredded credit cards.

After each service, Russell meets with "converts," who show him their credit-card statements. If their debt is verified, he authorizes his church treasurer to write a check to the creditors. The converts must then attend a seminar on staying solvent.

Some 60 families have been freed of debt since the revivals began more than a year ago. So far the congregation has wiped out $318,000 worth of debt. In return, those whose debts have been liquidated are asked to make an offering of at least $300 to the congregation.

"You can't serve your Master and MasterCard at the same time," Russell said.

Booming business

The ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict has generated a growing program for the World Council of Churches. Twenty-one participants in the WCC's Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel recently arrived in the Holy Land. EAPPI is based on Christian Peacemaker Teams' ministry of nonviolent presence in regions of hostility.

The new group of workers, who will each serve for at least three months, is the largest in EAPPI's 15 months of existence. They will join 10 longer-term volunteers in working with Palestinians and Israelis, said WCC News Service.

Since the program's inception, 80 people have participated, coming from Canada, Denmark, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

RESOURCES

Reinventing Aging by Shirley Yoder Brubaker et al (Herald Press, 2003, $10.99) shares stories and advice that bring growth, meaning and understanding to the process of growing older. It covers issues from bodily changes to financial decisions to preparing for death to rediscovering purpose in life.

Cosmic Grace and Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew, edited by John Chryssavgis (Eerdmans, 2003, $38), collects church statements and occasional addresses by the Ecumenical Patriarch, an outspoken religious leader on environmental issues.

A Theology of Compassion: Metaphysics of Difference and the Renewal of Tradition by Oliver Davies (Eerdmans, 2003, $37) argues for a renewal of metaphysics based on a dynamic new understanding of ontology as narrative and performance, which focuses on divine speech and God's compassionate relation to human culture.

Gateway Films, P.O. Box 540, Worcester, PA 19490, www.visionvideo.com, offers these new videos: **In the Footsteps of Martin Luther** (2003, $19.99, 27 minutes), which features 10 locations in Germany that represent significant stages in the reformer's life; **Precarious Peace: God and Guatemala** (2003, $24.99, 72 minutes), which explores the role of religion in the Guatemalan peace process; **Christian Life and Work** (2003, $39.99, 145 minutes), **Christian Life and Today's World** (2003, $39.99, 157 minutes) and **God at Work** (2003, $19.99, 40 minutes).

Essentials of Christian Theology, edited by William C. Placher (Westminster John Knox Press, 2003, $29.95), presents two essays by leading scholars on each of the major theological questions.

Scripture on the Silver Screen by Adele Reinhartz (Westminster John Knox Press, 2003, $24.95) questions the "Hollywood hermeneutics" that too often views the Bible as prop, but the book also recognizes the contributions of movies that successfully integrate the Bible as a plot-making device.

Practicing the Sacred Art of Listening: A Guide to Enrich Your Relationships and Kindle Your Spiritual Life by Kay Lindahl (SkyLight Paths, 2003, $16.95) offers practical advice and exercises to enhance listening capacity in a spirit-filled way.

The Healing Power of Kindness and **The Healing Power of Purpose** by Jean Maalouf (Twenty-Third Publications, 2003, $9.95 each) are part of a series to provide insightful answers to many of today's problems and offer a path to spirituality and wholeness.

Eyes at the Window by Evie Yoder Miller (Good Books, 2003, $22.95) is a historical novel about a close-knit community of Amish pioneers over several decades (up to the eve of the American Civil War).

Freedom for Native Americans: Are the Navajos Leading the Way? by Evan Oswald (2003, $14 includes postage) is available from the author at 6510 W. Butler Drive, #117, Glendale, AZ 85302, 623-934-1570.

Teaching Peace: Nonviolence and the Liberal Arts, edited by J. Denny Weaver and Gerald Biesecker-Mast (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2003, $26.95), collects essays by 22 Bluffton (Ohio) College professors on integrating a peace perspective in a variety of disciplines, from biology to choral directing. At the heart of the book is the idea that nonviolence is not a singular ethical issue but a worldview that impacts many issues.

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence by Lucia Unrau and Peter Terry (EM Productions, 2003, $15) is a CD of hymn arrangments for piano. To order contact EM Productions, 10 Pinebrook, Bluffton, OH 45817, 419-358-6551, unraul@bluffton.edu.

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If you don't currently receive the magazine but would like to consider it for small group discussions, call us for a trial issue or request one through our Web site.

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Everett J. Thomas

Death in the new year

Each New Year's Day I update my funeral plans. I've been doing that now for about a decade. This ritual started after my 36-year-old sister died unexpectedly, and our ailing father died two years later. At times during the funeral planning processes, for both of them, our family was uncertain how to organize some elements of their memorial services in ways that would best honor them.

So I resolved to help my family by writing down a few ideas in case they were suddenly needed. On the first day of each new year, I pull out the file and look over the list of suggestions of hymns to sing, friends and family members who might be pall bearers and one or two people who my family could ask to speak.

The exercise has not been morbid. Instead it has sparked some important conversations with family members. For example, I prefer that my body be cremated and the cremains scattered in a memorial garden in the courtyard at the entrance to our church. I like the idea that the physical remnants of my body will be in church until they disappear forever. But Barbara, my wife, has said that she prefers to have a place in the cemetery where she can go to grieve.

There are some other important benefits to this yearly ritual. The most important is that for one day, at least, I think intentionally about my life and consider what it would mean if it ended abruptly. Each year this rumination creates an about-face in orientation: Rather than planning for the future, I think about what it would mean if there is no longer a future for me on this earth.

While life is precious, for Christians it is not ultimately the most important element of our existence.

The thought of it all ending soon makes me sad. I think about the joys and pains, the challenges and opportunities I would miss. God has blessed me with a rich and full life; it is difficult to think that I would not have another three or four decades to enjoy it.

Thinking about dying, at least for one day each year, also shifts my perspective. Suddenly the issues and challenges that come along each day shrink in proportion to what is most important. Thinking about dying while busy living reminds me to live each day of each new year in light of eternity. It also reminds me that from the beginning of his life, Jesus was faced with death.

I imagine Jesus making decisions in his life based on what mattered in light of eternity. Luke 2, for example, tells the story of Jesus worrying his family for three days; they thought he was lost. But it ends with the 12- year-old saying, "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"

I imagine also that as a boy Jesus had reasons to think about dying long before that incident, since his life was threatened while he was still a defenseless child. January is the time to recall the first recorded threat on Jesus' life.

The publication date for this issue is Jan. 6, the day known as Epiphany. Many parts of the Christian church observe this as the day the child Jesus was revealed as the Christ. Some parts of the Christian church call it Three Kings Day. For many Christians in Hispanic cultures as well as some places in Europe, this day is more important than Christmas. Jan. 6 is the day to revisit the story of Jesus receiving gifts from the wise men, who were the first Gentiles to recognize and honor Jesus as the Christ.

But that visit also sparked the first threat on Jesus' life. Upon hearing from the magi about the newborn king, Herod was so threatened that he ordered all baby boys of Jesus' age to be killed in hopes that such a pogrom would remove any threat to his rule. Those innocent boys are the subject of Nina Forsythe's poem on page 15.

So Jesus was confronted by death at the very time he was revealed to the Gentile world as the Messiah. From the time he was a toddler, his life on this earth was a tenuous matter.

It is for us also. In a culture that obsesses about medical strategies to keep us alive, it can be a countercultural act to think carefully about dying. Doing so reminds us, even as we anticipate all that this new year offers, that while our mortal life is precious, for Christians it is not ultimately the most important element of our existence. Jesus knew that all his life; so can we.—*ejt*

The Mennonite

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Celebrate many peoples

Tammerie Spires is co-pastor at Many Peoples Mennonite Fellowship in Dallas, Texas.

It is a happy coincidence of the Mennonite Church calendar and the serendipities of church planting that the Church of Many Peoples officially began—and celebrates its anniversary—on Many Peoples Sunday. This Sunday falls near the secular holiday of Martin Luther King Day, which also is cause for celebration in our church.

Those who have been Mennonite longer than I perhaps remember the pre-merger joint gathering of the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church Aug. 1-6, 1989, in Normal, Ill. The theme, "Many Peoples Becoming God's People," was described as an expression of the church's ethnic diversity and "thus a cause for celebration. We are becoming more like the church for which our Lord prayed (John 17:11-12, 20-23; Ephesians 2:11-22)."

Our diversity, however limited, and our commitment to justice, however flawed in the implementation, *is* cause for celebration, and that's important to remember. People whose work in love for justice includes *denunciation* of what is wrong must also spend time and energy in *annunciation* of what has begun, of what goes right, of what is good and growing among us. But we can get so caught up in the injustices we denounce that we forget to celebrate the joys we can announce.

Lest we think annunciation and celebration are a waste of time, let's recall the first miracle story in the Gospel of John, which found Jesus at a wedding, enjoying the festivities and helping them continue when the wine supply ran short. Jesus often used table fellowship to share God's love with people, so often that he and his followers were accused of overindulgence by the religious leaders of his time.

Perhaps, in the spirit of 1 Corinthians 12, we need to discern that there are those among us with a gift for celebration and that that gift comes from the same Spirit and can be put to the service of the same Lord, recognizing that the same God activates annunciation of joy in each of our communities. Have we not seen laughter as a healing gift? Is not joy a sign of faith, when the world is caught up in conflict and violence? When we have broken bread together, isn't it easier to break down barriers raised by difference? Isn't community a manifestation of the Spirit, capable of leading to common good?

Perhaps your community will consider who among you has a gift for celebration and whether that is an anointing worth recognizing, a calling worth discerning. To celebrate love's triumph and long-awaited justice gives strength for the journey and helps us perceive the inbreaking reign of God.

We have many struggles in our small community: the fact that we are still small, despite our efforts to grow; the many calls on the time and energies of each member of our community; the ways we are attacked by the Evil One just for trying to live in the kin-dom of God. But come Jan. 25, given our belief in the power of annunciation and celebration, there will be a party going on at the Church of Many Peoples.

We will celebrate the existence of a church with three women in pastoral leadership. We will celebrate the diverse gifts and graces among us: ethnicities, foods, languages, ages, abilities. We will celebrate our relationships with faraway and nearby sister churches that support us prayerfully and financially, including Eden Mennonite Church in Moundridge, Kan., and Peace Mennonite Church in Dallas. We will celebrate being part of a denomination that goes beyond paying lip service to diversity, that works at the hard labors of achieving justice before seeking reconciliation.

As you and yours live into Jesus' call to life abundant, what will you find worth celebrating? Invite Jesus to the party; in your joy, his glory will be revealed (John 2:11). TM

TheMennonite

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Leaders and Coke

It is ironic that Mennonite leaders James Schrag and Fimbo Ganvunze would be enjoying Coke ("Conversations, Cokes Start Relationships," Dec. 16, 2003), since Coca-Cola has become well-known for its exploitative practices worldwide.

Last summer, while the Mennonite Church USA assembly gathered in Atlanta, many of us marched to the Coca-Cola headquarters to protest unfair labor practices. These practices include the murders of several union organizers at bottling plants in Colombia that are operated by Coca-Cola's subsidiary Femsa-Panamco. Coca-Cola is now the focus of an international boycott (70 percent of its income comes from outside the United States) because of exploitative practices in many places.

Coca-Cola is not unique among major corporations; such practices are becoming more common under the dominant model of economic globalization. But Mennonite leaders should be challenging such practices, not implicitly endorsing their products.—*Robert Walden, Bethlehem, Pa.*

Revelation does predict future

J. Denny Weaver's interpretation of the book of Revelation ("Worthy Is the Lamb," Dec. 16, 2003) is rather imaginative and quite selective. Contrary to Weaver's claim, Revelation does "predict the future." Some examples are found in chapters 20-22, where it describes the coming final judgment of sinners and the ultimate reward for God's people. Furthermore, Weaver seems to ignore the fierce wrath of God described both in the Old and New Testaments. Consider Revelations 14:9-11, which refers to the "wine of God's fury." Also read the entire passage that Weaver refers to (Revelation 19:11-21), where Jesus is seen as "the rider on the white horse." Verse 15 says that Jesus "treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty."

These and many other images of the wrath and judgment of God are not images of nonviolence. Certainly, because of the teaching and example of Jesus, his followers are called to live a life of peace and should not support war or violence in any form. But let's not ignore or miss the fearful wrath and judgment (both past and future) of a holy God, as the book of Revelation portrays with such vivid imagery.—*Paul C. Fretz, Marion, Pa.*

I was disappointed by the sloppy reasoning in J. Denny Weaver's article. He responds to the "every current war is clearly predicted in Revelation" straw man by constructing one of his own: "Revelation is not predicting the future." Instead he should have argued for the far more plausible "not everything in Revelation was necessarily a prediction of the future" position or even a "thoughtful Christians disagree" position.

Why does Weaver assume that the symbols in Revelation had to be fully comprehensible to first-century readers? Some of them may have been, but that seems like an odd filter to require of the text. The Bible is full of visions that we do not necessarily assume were completely understood by their first audiences. Furthermore, why does the author assume that the symbols had no meaning beyond their first-century meanings? Many biblical prophecies and visions had and have multiple layers of meaning and fulfillment.

Finally, does it make sense to state flatly, "Revelation is not predicting the future" when its later chapters clearly refer to entering heaven, to periods of 1,000 years (which would outlast John's first-century audience), to the fall of Satan, to the final judgment after a mass resurrection of the dead and so on. Does the author really think all those things were completed in the first century A.D.?—*Karl Lehman, Lancaster, Pa.*

Anabaptist theology offers alternative

Once again *The Mennonite* arrived, and I read it cover to cover in one sitting. It never disappoints me. Yet several recent issues were especially meaningful to me because of the articles by J. Nelson Kraybill ("Four Spiritual Truths of a Peacemaking God," Nov. 4, 2003) and J. Denny Weaver ("Worthy Is the Lamb," Dec. 16, 2003).

These are two of the best theological articles written for lay audiences that I have read in years. I admire the courage of both Kraybill and Weaver for having the compassion to speak the truth with love as they confront some American civil religion theologies that seem to be supplanting Anabaptist theology in some Mennonite congregations today. I mourn this loss.

IN THIS ISSUE

Feb. 1 is Church Education Sunday. Carlos Romero, executive director of Mennonite Education Agency, notes that "strong schools need a strong church" and claims that Mennonite educational institutions have helped our denomination develop a missional identity (page 12). Laurie Oswald provides four windows into Mennonite elementary and secondary education (page 8). But this year, congregations will be asked to do more than focus on church schools; the MEA is also calling on the church to bless the role of teacher no matter what the setting (page 32). A Kansas church has developed a ceremony in which teachers and mentors create a "Mennonite Mitzvah" experience for 13-year-olds in their congregation (page 14). And then there is the education Jacob received while wrestling with God's angel one long night (page 15).—*Editor*

As one who chose the Mennonite faith as an adult, I have found both articles to be not only affirming but also helpful as I attempt to explain to family, friends and occasionally to colleagues why I made this choice. Speaking as one who spends more time in theological conversation with those outside the church and with those unfamiliar with Anabaptism than with Christians or Anabaptists, I know firsthand that Anabaptist theology offers a clear, healing alternative to a hurting yet thinking world.

Thank you for giving these two scholars the opportunity to provide information that is easy to share with those outside the church.—*Patricia Burdette, Butler, Ohio*

Four spiritual truths

Regarding J. Nelson Kraybill's article on the four spiritual truths of a peacemaking God (Nov. 4, 2003): I am frequently dismayed at the tone of criticism leveled at anyone outside the Anabaptist perspective regarding evangelism. Especially did I feel this was true in regard to Kraybill's treatment of Bill Bright's "Four Spiritual Laws."

I agree with Neal Clemens (Readers Say, Dec. 16, 2003) who also wondered why we can't just praise the Lord for the amazing manner in which the Lord used Bright's strategy to lead thousands to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Let's learn from other Christian leaders instead of being critical of them.—*Ruby Nissley, La Jara, Colo.*

Although Kraybill does not give credit in his article "Four Spiritual Truths of a Peacemaking God," he puts into a few pages the atonement theory that J. Denny Weaver writes about much more expansively and calls "Narrative Christus Victor." Although Weaver in his book develops the ideas more completely, I felt Kraybill showed concisely and well that Christus Victor fits the gospel story much better than does Anselm's substitutionary atonement idea.

In his short essay, Kraybill challenged us helpfully with a way of looking at the meaning of Jesus and the gospel message. However, I would have liked to see more discussion of what this implies for how we confront the present age in which most of us, including our Mennonite institutions, are deeply connected with worldly forces that very likely are demonic: They exploit the weak of the world and the natural resources on which all our lives depend. If we are depending on our mutual fund investments for our future livelihood, are we ever free of being involved in the exploitation that many of the powerful of the world take as their natural right?

Another problem is that a Christus Victor view of the gospel will have difficulty gaining a place in our Mennonite churches when a large percentage of the hymns reflect Anselm's substitutionary atonement model.—*Larry Eby, Albany, Ore.*

Confession driven by pride?

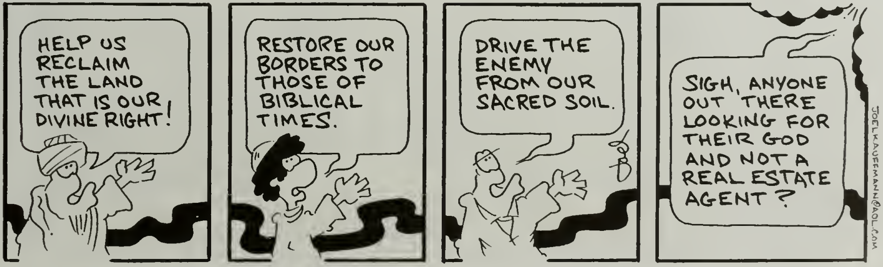
I appreciated the informative debate between Marlin Jeschke and Marlene Kropf on the use of liturgical confession of sin in our worship services ("Liturgical Confession of Sin?" Dec. 2, 2002).

I respect both writers but find Jeschke's argument more cogent. I often find the confession of sin liturgy forcing me to speak words of confession that do not fit my experience at the moment. Or I choose not to join in with the rest of the congregation. I believe that at least we ought to balance the confession of sin with an acknowledgement that we have done some things right on our faith journey. I cannot imagine Jesus asking his disciples every time they got together to confess how they have fallen short of his expectations. I see Jesus to be an encourager and supporter of people who find themselves falling short of society's expectations.

Is it our need as Mennonites to "be not proudful" that pushes us toward continual confessing of our shortcomings? Is it not also helpful to rejoice that our lives are being changed by God's grace and by the support of the Christian community?—*Calvin R. King, Arden, N.C.*

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**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this date in Mennonite history

Jan. 20, 1892— The first Mennonite Church mission agency, the Mennonite Evangelizing Board, is formed at Elkhart, Ind.

Colombian worker kidnapped, released

BOGOTÁ, Colombia—A Colombian Mennonite peace worker abducted by Marxist insurgents on Dec. 17, 2003, was set free with another captive on Dec. 30, thanks in part to the efforts of Colombian Mennonite Church leaders.

Juan Castilla Urueta was kidnapped along with businessman Jhony Jose Rios Anaya. Castilla is a conflict resolution expert with JustaPaz, the Colombian Mennonite peace and justice ministry. Authorities believe the two were abducted by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC.

According to reports, about 30 million pesos, or $10,800, was paid to secure the release of Castilla and Rios. JustaPaz founder Ricardo Esquivia was involved in the negotiations.

Castilla and Rios were taken from La Esmerelda, a farm near Sincelejo operated by the Protestant Council of Churches of Colombia. La Esmerelda was started in 2001 to help Colombian farmers displaced by the region's rampant unrest. Sincelejo is home of Emmaus Church, a Mennonite congregation pastored by Castilla's mother that has been active in helping families displaced by violence in rural Colombia.—*Mennonite Weekly Review*

MCC sending aid to Iran after earthquake

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is sending 50,000 blankets and needs 18,000 more in response to the Dec. 26, 2003, earthquake that devastated Bam, Iran. It killed an estimated 30,000 people and left 40,000-100,000 homeless.

The Iranian Red Crescent Society has reported there are sufficient relief supplies for the moment, but items are badly needed to replenish IRCS's reserves. "They have a real need at the moment for restocking their supplies," says Ed Martin, director of MCC's programs in Central and South Asia.

The blankets are the first step in MCC's earthquake response. MCC will also provide funds for other relief items, such as milk powder, and MCC staff will be working with IRCS on reconstruction policies, likely in the areas of health and education.

MCC began work in Iran following the June 1990 quake that killed more than 30,000 people in the areas of Gilan and Zanjan. MCC assisted in reconstructing village health clinics and replenishing IRCS warehouses.—*MCC News Service*

Bethel professor promoting peace

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—As a theologian and longtime advocate for peace and justice, Duane K. Friesen appreciates that the World Council of Churches has chosen the first 10 years of the 21st century as the "Decade to Overcome Violence." Friesen, Bible and religion professor at Bethel College in North Newton, has been a participant in discussions related to the WCC's designation.

The Historic Peace Churches—Mennonite, Quaker and Church of the Brethren—held a meeting in 2001 in Switzerland to consider how they could contribute to the WCC's ecumenical dialogue. The conference concluded with a meeting at the WCC offices in Geneva. Out of those discussions, Friesen wrote, "The Decade to Overcome Violence: A Historic Peace Church Perspective," which was printed in a recent issue of *The Ecumenical Review,* a quarterly WCC journal.

"The church is called by God to be a people among the nations," Friesen wrote. "The center of history is not empire … but a people God has chosen from among the nations to be a light to all the peoples of the world."

His essay was one of five selected for publication.

Gathered for the feast

Mario Araya (left to right), pastor of New Holland (Pa.) Spanish Mennonite Church; Eastern Mennonite Missions church consultant Antonio Ulloa; Tilahun Beyene, an Ethiopian and International Missions Association coordinator; and Javier Soler, pastor of San Pedro Amor Vivienta Church in Honduras and IMA vice chair, visit during an IMA fund-raising banquet Nov. 22, 2003, in Lancaster, Pa. IMA is a fellowship of eight mission agencies, including EMM, from four continents. Beyene is employed by EMM, which also supplied initial funding for IMA. About 80 people attended the banquet, which was held at James Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster.

EMM photo by Dale D. Gehman

The others came from writers in Cuba, Kenya, the Netherlands and the Philippines.

For each year of the decade, the WCC will focus on a specific area of the world. This year it is the United States. The aim is to strengthen churches and movements working for peace, encourage mutual accountability and deepen the understandings of issues such as power, militarism and community building.

Mennonite Women awards scholarships

NEWTON, Kan.—Mennonite Women has selected 11 women to receive International Women's Fund scholarships for 2004. IWF provides for church leadership training for women around the world. This year's recipients come from Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, India, Kenya and Paraguay and will receive a total of $7,000 to help pay education-related expenses.

One of the recipients is Patricia Rosero, who serves without pay as pastor of Santa Martha Mennonite Church in Colombia and is working on a theology degree at the Mennonite seminary in Bogotá. "Her commitment to her studies and ministry is all the more impressive because she has been confined to a wheelchair since her early teens," wrote her application sponsor. "Bogotá buildings and streets are far from being wheelchair friendly. Seminary classes are on the third floor, and so Patricia needs to be carried up and down in her wheelchair by two able-bodied men."

Other recipients are Albania Molina de Romero of Honduras, Preeti Chauhan of India, Myrian Palomo of Paraguay, Darleen Ratzlaff of Paraguay, Martha Santanilla of Colombia, Reena Tandi of India, Veena Wankhade of India, Rebecca Osiro of Kenya, Viola Harder of Paraguay and Sandra Campos Cruz of Costa Rica.—*Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Commentary series names new editor

HILLSBORO, Kan.—Douglas Miller, associate professor of biblical and religious studies at Tabor College, has been named Old Testament editor for the Believers Church Bible Commentary series published by Herald Press. Tabor is a Mennonite Brethren school in Hillsboro. Miller succeeds Elmer A. Martens, who is stepping down after having served in the position since the series was started 25 years ago.

Miller holds a bachelor's degree from Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Okla., a master's degree from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., and a doctorate from Princeton (N.J.) Theological Seminary. He is the author of two books and has been published in the *Journal of Biblical Literature, Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Koinonia,* denominational periodicals and in two collections of essays by Mennonite scholars. Miller is also the general editor of *Direction*, a Mennonite Brethren academic journal.

WINNIE
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Covering the crisis

This quilt, stitched at last August's Mennonite World Conference assembly in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, is traveling the world as a "powerful symbol of solidarity" with those living with HIV/AIDS, says Denise Landes, a German Mennonite who works with a South African AIDS project. The quilt was in the United States last fall and is now in Europe. It will go to Ontario next month and eventually return to Africa.

He is now writing the Ecclesiastes commentary for the Believers Church Bible Commentary series.

Canadian budget stands by service cuts

WINNIPEG—The General Board of Mennonite Church Canada decided at a November 2003 meeting to stand by its earlier decision to eliminate Christian Service Ministries, which includes Mennonite Voluntary Service, Service Adventure and Youth Venture.

The cut was made due to financial pressures. But delegates at last summer's denominational assembly called on the General Board to explore ways to maintain "congregationally based Christian service ministry in Canada."

"To reinstate Christain Service Ministries in some form would mean making new cuts elsewhere in the system," said assistant moderator Joy Kroeger. "General Board members clearly endorsed the ideal of promoting an ethic of service and discipleship, but at this point in the life of [Mennonite Church] Canada, committing program dollars to it would mean compromising another ministry.—*Canadian Mennonite*

4 windows
Mennon

by Laurie L. Oswald

Window one

Sarai Jones, graduate of Philadelphia Mennonite High School: Pennsylvania

What made Philadelphia Mennonite High School (PMHS) different from public school for Sarai Jones was not the word Mennonite. It was that she was a person, not a number.

Her emotional and spiritual growth meant as much to teachers and administrators as her academic progress, says Sarai, who graduated in 2002 from PMHS, founded in 1996 as the first Mennonite high school in a city. And when her life got stormy, they provided a safe harbor.

"I remember feeling like just a number out of thousands of kids that went to the public school," Sarai says. "On the first day at the Mennonite school, I had butterflies, I was so scared. But after I went to my classes and chapel, I was amazed at how all the students and teachers and even Mrs. Barbara Moses, the principal, welcomed me.

"I went home and told my mom how unbelievable the school was and how everyone was so caring and accepted me for who I was."

Sarai grew in self-confidence because of these affirming relationships. But then she faced a string of deaths in her family that shook and frightened her.

"There was a time when I couldn't go through six months to a year without someone dying in my family," Sarai says. "I'll never forget the day one of my teachers, Pamela Seretny, asked me if I was OK.

"When I answered no, she didn't put up a wall. She opened up her arms and received me and gave me a big hug. I knew right then that Philadelphia Mennonite High School was changing my life forever."

Sarai also remembers Moses' open-door policy as different from public school.

"In public school, you were lucky if the administrators even knew your name," Sarai says. "But at Philadelphia Mennonite, each student has a personal relationship with Mrs. Moses. She is like a mother. You knew that, because she gave you that look."

Challenge, as well as comfort, characterized these loving relationships, Sarai says. Moses was big on peacemaking. And Pamela's standards in the classroom were high. One of a 10-person faculty, Pamela teaches Bible, biology, environmental science, art and health for about 80 students in ninth through 12th grade.

"When students had conflicts with others, we'd end up in Mrs. Moses' office," Sarai says. "She'd ask us if we were following the 'think' principle: Were our interactions truthful, helpful, inspiring, necessary and kind?

"If we said no, then she'd say, 'Then why are you arguing with me? Go think with each other and then come back to my office.' She'd make us hold hands, pray and hug. I didn't want to hug, but when Mrs. Moses said hug, you hugged."

Barbara and Pamela say Sarai brings them joy as they watch her life bear fruit from seeds planted at PMHS. After graduation, Sarai earned her real-estate license from a community college in Philadelphia, then graduated at the top of her class at Empire Cosmetology School in Philadelphia.

She was one of four students selected from her cosmetology graduating class to work aboard a world-touring ship that began its journey Oct. 22 in Nepal. She also spoke Oct. 3 at the Mennonite Educators Conference in Chevy Chase, Md.

Barbara says: "She is one more validation that the Lord has planted this school in the middle of the city. … He's being glorified as he allows us to positively influence so many students' lives."

A safe harbor: Clockwise from upper left, Barbara Moses, Pamela Seretny and Sarai Jones.

The impact of Mennonite elementary and secondary education on students, parents and teachers from three U.S. regions

on
te education

Pamela says: "I'm so grateful I can be part of a school where I'm not only allowed to be a teacher but also a mentor. … It's so important to let these young people know there's someone who cares."

Window two

John and Ruth Roth, parents of students at Bethany Christian Schools: Goshen, Ind.

After hearing John and Ruth Roth talk about the value of Mennonite education for their four daughters, one sees a link between early modeling and later lifestyle choices.

The Roths' oldest daughter, Sarah, 18, attends Goshen (Ind.) College, and their other daughters attend Bethany Christian Schools, a middle and high school in Goshen that has about 300 students. Three of those students are the Roth sisters: Leah, 16, a junior; Hannah, 14, a freshman; and Mary, 12, a seventh grader.

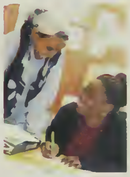
The Roths, graduates of Central Christian High School in Kidron, Ohio, say their high school experience, coupled with their teaching careers, have convinced them of the value of Mennonite education. He teaches history at Goshen College, and she teaches first grade at Model Elementary School in Goshen.

John knows how impressionable youth are. An interterm class he took in New York City when he was 14 marked his views for life, he says. For 2½ weeks during the Watergate scandal, they studied the interplay of religion and politics.

"Those 2½ weeks changed my life, as we examined whether being a Christian made a difference in one's politics," he says. "We stayed at the VS house, visited the Capitol and heard peace workers from Mennonite Central Committee talk about their work in Central America.

"I came home deeply aware of the world I read about in the newspapers and connected that in a profound way with my life at church. That class and my time at Central helped me make important connections between the way the world is and the way it should be."

Now he wants to provide those same connec-



I'm so grateful I can be part of a school where I'm not only allowed to be a teacher but also a mentor.
—Pamela Seretny

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

tions for his daughters. But he knows he can't do it alone. So he depends on his faith community to help, he says.

"The children need more than just Ruth and me, and their upbringing needs to be shared," he says. "We see Mennonite education as an extension of our home and congregation. We can't be super parents. We have limits. But God provides other resources."

Mennonite schools shape those educational resources with an Anabaptist perspective her girls would not get in public schools, says Ruth, who works in the public school system. Mennonite schools do not provide a cocoon from the world but a context in which to see that world through God's eyes, she says. "I don't want to shelter them from the real world, and Bethany and Goshen help them see the broader world and broader issues that are important to us," she says. "We don't want to narrow or isolate our daughters, but we do want to provide a context, a lens.

"At Mennonite schools, they get a focus on service, peace, respect for others and how they fit into the wider world with these values. ... I believe the environments in our schools push our daughters to look beyond themselves in a self-focused society."

Even as the Roths value Mennonite schools, they've not wanted to coerce their daughters to attend them. But they strive to guide and influence them positively.

Ruth says: "Parents underestimate the influence they have with their children. Children pick up on cues about what is important and why.

"And parents also underestimate the importance of the school environment. Children spend a significant amount of time outside the home. Most of their waking hours are spent with people other than us. It is significant to me who those people are."

Parents underestimate the influence they have with their children. Children pick up on cues about what is important and why.
—Ruth Roth

Anabaptist perspective: Ruth and John Roth

Window three

Mary Forney, Travis Kliewer, teachers at Iowa Mennonite School: Kalona, Iowa

When Mary Forney, English teacher at Iowa Mennonite School (IMS) in Kalona, encouraged Travis Kliewer to develop his gifts, she didn't expect he'd come back to IMS as a peer.

But more than a decade after he graduated, Travis, 29, is an English teacher along with Mary. Travis, at IMS for three years, and Mary, at IMS for 17 years, form the two-person English department at the school. It serves about 175 students in grades nine through 12.

Their relationship began in 1991,when Mary first taught Travis as a junior in English class. She saw his potential and pushed him to excel.

"When I came to IMS after spending junior high in the public schools, I remember IMS being a lot harder, and the teachers had higher expectations," Travis says. "And though I was good at writing and English, Mary pushed me to go beyond even that.

"But she didn't just push me into a corner and leave me alone. She gave me a lot of support and one-on-one attention. She went beyond just grading my papers. And she always encouraged me not to settle for getting a grade but to give it my all."

Travis took her words to heart, although it took a few years for his love of writing and English to blossom. He studied a year at Hesston (Kan.) College and a year at Goshen (Ind.) College, where he got married and pursued carpentry while Kristine, his wife, finished her education degree.

They moved to the Kalona area, where he completed a bachelor's degree in English and a minor in philosophy from the University of Iowa in Iowa City. He later received a teaching certificate through Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va.

"I always thought that if I taught, I would like it to be at IMS," Travis says. "It has always been an important place for me. After going to public school and then going here, I could see they were entirely different communities.

"It was much warmer at IMS, and the teachers, like Mary, were so welcoming. We don't go by Mr. and Mrs. We use first names. That sets a tone that shows we want a real relationship with the students. We are not supervisors. We are mentors."

"It was really exciting to have him come back to IMS as a faculty person," Mary says. "And it's so much fun to work with him, as we share a love of English and help students to love it, too."

Travis says: "It's a luxury to work with a mentor and friend that I admire professionally. We both believe that literature can be a key to understanding the larger world outside the four walls of the Kalona community. … Literature helps people understand themselves better, and writing helps them find a place in that world."

They also help students explore that world within an Anabaptist context, Mary says.

"I believe in treating youth like whole persons and showing them they can make a difference in the world," she says. "So often we treat them as if they don't matter. But if we give them a vision of justice as seen through Jesus Christ, they will pursue that vision.

"Writing helps them ask questions and express their inner thoughts. … Having freedom to question helps make their faith stronger.

"There's a lot going on inside teenagers, and IMS gives them a safe place to figure all that out. And at a Christian school, we are free to help them do their process without leaving out the spiritual."

Window four

Zig Derochowski, sixth-grade teacher at Western Mennonite High School: Salem, Ore.

When New Horizons Academy in McMinnville, Ore., shut down, Zig Derochowski—its principal and head teacher—searched the area for good schools to recommend to former students. Western Mennonite High School in nearby Salem was one.

In 1989, Zig followed some of his former students to Western, where he's a sixth-grade teacher, middle school director and girls' basketball coach. Four of his five children also attend Western, which serves about 175 students in grades six through 12.

"When New Horizons was closing down because of financial troubles, I knew a lot of Christian parents that still wanted their kids to attend a good Christian school," says Zig, a member of New Horizons Church, a nondenominational congregation that sponsored the former academy, a one-room schoolhouse that served students in grades one through 12.

"I [got] information on all the Christian schools in the area," he says. "I found Western through two of my former elementary students whose older sisters attended Western. Also my pastor, Galen Gingerich, graduated from Western."

It wasn't long before parents recommended his name to Eric Martin, principal at Western, who hired Zig. Since the teacher joined the faculty, the school has impressed him as being distinctive from other Christian schools, he says.

Most striking for him is Western's ability to be so relational. That includes fostering community among its Mennonite constituency, loving students and faculty unconditionally, promoting peacemaking and forming servant-hearted youth.

"One thing that blows me away is how much support Western gets from Mennonite congregations," he says. "That includes a lot of congregations who don't even have kids here but want to support Mennonite education. Coming from where I [did]—having to close down a school because of financial troubles—this is just amazing."

As amazing for Zig is that the administration is so open to his ideas and to the diversity of students. About 30 percent of the student body is Mennonite.

"There are a lot of different denominations represented here among the student body and faculty, but we are a unified body," he says. "I think that's because the administrators are relational people who want to see all of us become the people God created us to be.

"But they also are aware that the process happens differently for different people. Eric and others give us freedom to discover who we are as individuals. Every student is helped to have a positive image of self. That means affirming their gifts and not shaming them for their weaknesses. Here at Western, weaknesses are OK, because we all have them, and God still loves us and works with us as we help each other grow."

He also believes this kind of love is applied in the world as well as on campus. During the U.S.-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Zig—who doesn't consider himself a pacifist—says he watched Eric's response. He wanted to see if Eric's Anabaptist ideals held up under a nation at war.

"It's one thing to have views on peace, but it's quite another to walk it out," Zig says. "I saw Eric walk out his faith. He is slow to speak, quick to listen and slow to come to conclusions. That made me stop and re-evaluate my own views. By his example, I'm more interested in seeing our nation take things much more slowly before going to war."

Service, as well as peace, is an area where students are given opportunities to "walk the talk," he says. "Here at Western, I see a real heart for service. And it's often the Mennonite kids you see leading out on this the most. … We have service afternoons at such places as nursing homes and animal shelters, and we do yard work on campus.

"As director of the middle school, I've even closed down classes for a day once because learning to work together can be just as important as academics. As they moved rocks and used shovels and helped each other, it built character and relationships." TM

One thing that blows me away is how much support Western gets from Mennonite congregations.—Zig Derochowiski

Laurie L. Oswald, news service director for Mennonite Church USA, wrote these stories for Mennonite Education Agency (MEA) after attending the Mennonite Educators Conference and Mennonite Education Agency board meeting, held Oct. 2-5, 2003, in Chevy Chase, Md.

Strong together

by Carlos Romero

As Mennonite Church USA celebrates Church Education Sunday on Feb. 1, it is important to look at the role of Anabaptist-Mennonite educational institutions, from elementary and secondary schools through colleges, universities and seminaries.

In a time when the church needs leaders, Anabaptist-Mennonite educational institutions are vital in nurturing and training these people.

A strong church needs strong schools. Our educational institutions help provide a framework for developing Mennonite Church USA's missional identity. Many have reflected our new missional focus throughout their history, as they shared our values within and beyond the church.

The Gideon Project, a 1990s higher education study sponsored by Mennonite Board of Education (one of Mennonite Education Agency's predecessor agencies), found that, at their best, Anabaptist-Mennonite educational institutions integrate the vertical relationship between humankind and God (opportunities for faith development) with the horizontal relationship between people and between the individual and society, the focus on being salt and light in our world.

This concept fits perfectly with the missional Mennonite Church USA. Our values, theology and distinct understandings of the world and how it is affected by our faith are wonderful gifts that should be shared.

Anabaptist-Mennonite education has something to say to those who believe violence is the only way to solve world problems. It has something to share about commitment to justice and compassion in times when the gap is increasing between those who have and those who lack in our world.

The Christ-centeredness of Anabaptism is a key aspect of our educational outreach. Delegates to last summer's Mennonite Church USA assembly in Atlanta named this focus as a top priority for Anabaptist-Mennonite education and gave strong affirmation that institutions are already striving toward the goal.

These messages are for all who are part of our school families. The aim is not to educate students to be Mennonites but to welcome all people connected to and supportive of Mennonite Church USA congregations to be learners and teachers along with us.

Our educational institutions help maintain and strengthen our faith. In a time when the church needs leaders, Anabaptist-Mennonite educational

Mennonite education supports the missional church.

To provide an Anabaptist-Mennonite worldview is one of the most valuable gifts we can provide in the educational agenda of our church.

institutions are vital in nurturing and training these people.

Richard Hughes in his book *How the Christian Faith Can Sustain the Life of the Mind* says this about the Anabaptist-Mennonite model of education:

"Mennonites do indeed focus on the hands and the heart, but instead of constituting a liability, this emphasis is one of the greatest strengths. For when Mennonites focus on hand and heart, they remind us that human life is more than cognition. They therefore help us see that higher education in the Christian genre must be multifaceted and holistic, helping students develop every aspect of their being, not simply their minds."

This is part of the context the church provides for us and what makes Anabaptist-Mennonite education distinctive. It is not that we do not value high academic excellence; we do and we must. But in Hughes' words:

"Mennonites prize the life of the mind but rarely divorce cognition from lifestyle commitments, grounded in Christian faith. More precisely, Mennonites begin their task by seeking to implement a vision of discipleship that takes its cue from the radical teachings of Jesus."

Strong schools need a strong church, and the support of families and congregations. Mennonite Education Agency (MEA) is happy to report significant growth in church-matching grants—funds donated by congregations to colleges, universities and seminaries for the support of their member students that are matched by the institutions themselves. Such giving for Bethel, Bluffton, Goshen and Hesston colleges and Eastern Mennonite University combined has increased more than 36 percent from 1994 to now.

One of the ways MEA is working to articulate the core values of an Anabaptist-Mennonite school is by inviting the governance boards of all colleges, universities, seminaries and elementary and secondary schools to an Education Leaders Gathering in February 2005. The preparation process for that gathering will include input from each campus and school and from church and conference leaders throughout Mennonite Church USA.

To provide an Anabaptist-Mennonite worldview is one of the most valuable gifts we can provide in the educational agenda of our church. This worldview not only affects our graduates but the people worldwide touched by their lives. This is the missional goal of education in Mennonite Church USA.

Carlos Romero is executive director of Mennonite Education Agency.

The role of parents in Mennonite education

by Ruth Stoltzfus Jost

It's college decision time. Our Anabaptist-Mennonite colleges are ready—buildings are renovated, programs are inspired, faculty is committed. These treasures have enriched us all. It's time for us parents to pass them along to the next generation. Do you want the Anabaptist-Mennonite college experience for your high school senior? Your views are a major influence. Here are some talking points we're sharing with our high school senior right now (Your points may be different, but now is the time to make them.):

Get grounded. Whether you're interested in anthropology or zoology, we want you to get a broad exposure to liberal arts knowledge, not just your current interests. That means beginning with a solid grounding in our tradition. We want you to be biblically and theologically literate. We want you to see how faith and intellect invigorate each other. (The time to specialize in your chosen field is likely in grad school.)

Get positioned. At an Anabaptist-Mennonite college you can work closely with faculty and be well positioned for grad school acceptance and jobs because your professors can recommend you with firsthand knowledge of your ability. We've seen the numbers on this, and their record is excellent.

Get connected. Not necessarily with high-profile achievers. Not necessarily at an elite school. Anabaptist-Mennonite colleges serve a people. We know the benefits of good connections are considerable. But we think being part of a people is more valuable. Your dad and I have all kinds of friends and connections from every era of our lives. But the circle of friends we made from the years, even a brief semester, at an Anabaptist-Mennonite college is deep and lifelong. This is the time in your life to make some grounding connections, and we want you to be able to make them at an Anabaptist-Mennonite college.

Get out of debt. We know some of the benefits of an Anabaptist-Mennonite college aren't clear to you at this age. We're going to add an incentive. We've said we will find a way to loan you money for expenses you still have after any aid, grants or scholarships you get. If you go to an Anabaptist-Mennonite college, we'll pay those expenses outright, no repayment from you. Anabaptist-Mennonite college tuition is a bargain compared with an elite school. It beats pouring our savings into a cheaper state school because our money goes for something we believe in. And you graduate debt free.

Get going. Call your three best friends. Pick a weekend. We're driving you all there for a visit.

Ruth Stoltzfus Jost is an alumnus of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., and Timothy, her husband, attended Goshen (Ind.) College. Jacob Stoltzfus Jost graduated from Goshen, and Micah Stoltzfus Jost is currently a freshman there.

Menno Mitzvah

A ceremony for marking faith in Mennonite teens

by Carolyn Rich Voth

Thirteen is a roller-coaster age: emotional swings, friends who praise and taunt with equal intensity. It's also a vital time for young people to own their faith and make choices that reflect a spiritual and ethical stand that may be different from the crowd.

Rachel was about to turn 13. Ben and Maggie were right behind. For the parents in their small group, it became a priority to help the church's children navigate the sometimes confusing path through the teen years. As an urban church, our families are often removed from their extended families and like-minded communities, and our youth are frequently the only Mennonites in their school. While small groups and youth groups take on extra importance in this setting, we felt more could be done to support our teens. How could we help our young people successfully manage the pressures of secular society? How could we encourage a strong faith and a healthy self-image?

As Anabaptists, we want to invite all our children, at every age, to take their faith seriously. However, we also know that many are not prepared to take the adult step of baptism at 13. Many of us had participated in a Bar or Bat Mitzvah as our children's Jewish friends turned 13 and became "sons or daughters of the commandments." Many discussions and prayers later, the small group developed a ceremony to mark a 13-year-old's gradual transition into adulthood from a Mennonite perspective. After a meeting with the youth group, our pastors and the city's rabbi and his family, we decided to call the ceremony a Menno Mitzvah. This ceremony would declare a young Mennonite's intention to live life true to the lessons and example of Christ.

Usually students are surprised at the acceptance, love and confidence others display toward them.

A Menno Mitzvah is created by the teen and his or her parents or guide but includes some consistent elements. The student, with the help of an adult, selects Bible passages that seem especially helpful and meaningful at their point in life. To deepen their understanding, students may discuss, memorize, pray through, respond with art and/or a service project reflecting the chosen passages.

Students and families are encouraged to invite a small group of guests with whom to celebrate. The group usually includes the pastors, family, youth group members and leaders and others in the church with special ties to the students. Sometimes a significant public school teacher is included.

Students share their gifts. Some choose to play a musical instrument or sing. Some read from their writings, dance or display art. Some students explain a favorite school project, hobby or collection. Because being in the spotlight is difficult for some 13-year-olds, this is a flexible component of the service.

A significant element of the service is the "naming of gifts." Those attending are invited to describe a special gift they have observed in the student. Usually students are surprised at the acceptance, love and confidence others display toward them. The words reinforce the student's self-confidence and spiritual growth.

Often the student is given a memory book. It contains the Menno Mitzvah invitation, program, letters from relatives who couldn't come and notes from those in attendance. Rachel Voth, the first to have a Menno Mitzvah, said, "Over the next few years, the memory book reminded me that I had a caring community who loved me." This becomes an important reminder during stressful teen years.

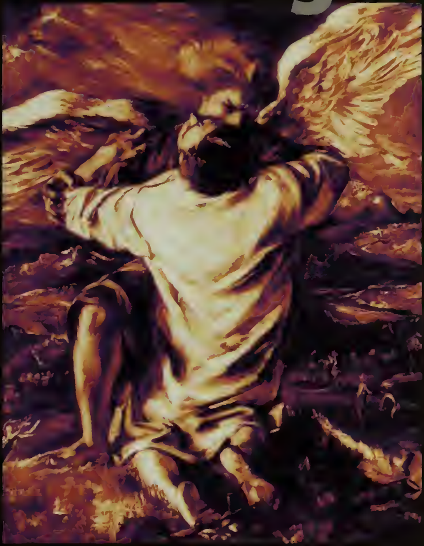
As a part of the ritual, our pastor takes the student Bible shopping a week or two in advance. They share a special time to talk, and the student learns about various Bible editions. Together they choose an edition they believe will be most helpful for spiritual growth and study in the coming years. The Bible is beautifully inscribed by one of our church artists and presented at the celebration.

Singing of the student's favorite hymns or praise songs and a good dose of laughter are always included. Other elements, including a favorite meal or refreshments, often are added.

When asked what having had a Menno Mitzvah meant to them, our young people respond with appreciation and affirmation. Aimee Siebert, now 16, said: "It was inspiring and uplifting to have all those people who had been with me for 13 years and to share my talents. I realized how each of those people helped form [my talents]. I was challenged to think about how I would use my gifts in the future." Perhaps the adolescent roller coaster can be more easily traversed after all. TM

Carolyn Rich Voth is a member of Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka, Kan.

STILL grappling


"Jacob Wrestling with the Angel" by Frederick Taubes/Three Lions

by Laurie Klein

I am looking for the face I had
before the world was made.—Yeats

Name me. Who else can?
Such are my pictures of greatness: you

braced for challenge, grip
sinew, strung on a trellis of bone; I

lock flesh around wing and fire—
I will not let go. Though muscled,

knuckled, this body, bent
like a lyre, is easily shaken, each joint

brittle, and already strained. Go on,
unstring me, if takedown means

dawn, in the shape of your face. For this
I'd yield: my alias changed, strength

renewed, the aching socket relieved,
replete, brimming with oil.

Laurie Klein lives in Deer Park, Wash.

Readers' choice
a Bible study series

The *hidde*

Matthew 13:44-46—sixth in a series

by Randy Good

We asked readers to send us Scripture passages they wanted writers to address. We then asked various Bible teachers, pastors and church workers to respond. Here is the sixth in a series of Bible studies. These have run once each month. *—Editors*

Not long ago, hundreds of thousands of people were involved in a hopeful search. They were all looking for the same thing and imagining that if they could find it, it would change their lives. They searched in attics and basements, in closets, ashtrays, dresser drawers, old coffee cans and under car seats. Then they wracked their brains to think of where else it could possibly be—this item of such great value, if only they could find it—and that once found, it would prove to be genuine, real, all it was cracked up to be. What was this lost, precious, life-changing thing?

It was the fifth nickel, the last of five illegally minted 1913 Liberty Head nickels—with a reward of $1 million.

Hundreds of thousands of other people never even thought of looking. I mean, what are the chances? It could easily be at the bottom of any of 100,000 wishing wells or at the bottom of a river under 100,000 bridges or buried in the guts of 100,000 candy machines or old jukeboxes or nickel slot machines, unwittingly spent decades ago, or days ago, in the normal, mundane process of just having a life. Why get your hopes up? It would take a miracle.

Now it has been found, found by the family of someone who had it all along, found at the bottom of an old shoe box at the back of a closet, discarded there because that someone had been told by some expert years ago that it was worthless—not worth a plug nickel.

So the hunt is over. The fifth nickel has been found. How is it now for all those thousands who were searching high and low? What has become of the place inside their souls from which the daydreams of having it all had sprung? Maybe there was some greediness in some; maybe there was something grander and good that got released inside them as they pondered what they might do for others with some of that wealth. Maybe, as they let their imagination run with the possibilities, it started to feel almost real. These inclinations to do something potent for someone else began to solidify—all from what was already inside them—before the nickel had been found. But now it has been found by someone else, and they are left realizing that they really would have gladly given everything if, in giving it, they could have gotten that nickel.

This whole nickel business has reminded me in a fresh way about some truths Jesus told and some truths I believe. The first is a story about what is of actual, inestimable value to us.

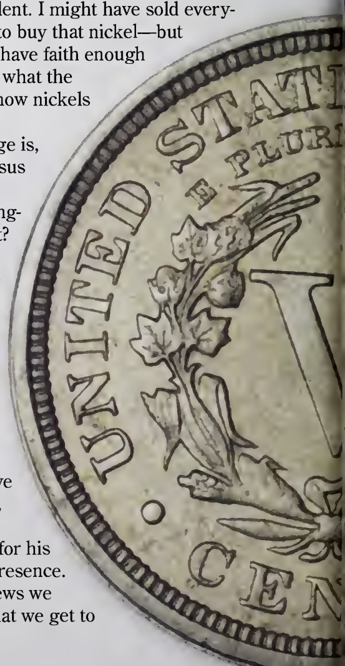
"The kingdom of God is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it" (Matthew 13:44-46 NIV).

This story gives a picture of how incredibly worth it it is to walk with Jesus.

The missing million-dollar nickel is a good enough equivalent. I might have sold everything in order to buy that nickel—but only because I have faith enough that it is worth what the experts who know nickels say it is worth.

The challenge is, Do I believe Jesus when he says entering his kingdom is worth it? Do I have faith enough that he is an expert on this? I find that I do. I have found my fifth nickel. I have found, in my own ordinary, everyday life that I believe in Jesus Christ, and this belief opens the way for his transforming presence.

The good news we have to tell—that we get to



treasure

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tell—is that there's a fifth nickel for everyone. Jesus has set no limit. He longs for everyone to find the treasure. And when you have found your Liberty nickel, go ahead and live out of the wealth of soul it provides.

Another story reminds me of what God says is of actual, inestimable value to him.

"Then Jesus told them this parable: Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

"Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:3-10 NIV).

What a picture! God has found his fifth nickel, too. The Father's response to us being found is incredible joy—we are his fifth nickel. When he has us, he has everything he desires, and he desires us so much that he paid everything, the life of his son, for us. It is hard to comprehend how desired we are. We know what goes on inside us. How can it be that God would desire me?

Do we have faith enough in what God says to begin to believe that the so-called experts—who convince us we aren't worth a plug nickel, so we end up burying our souls in a shoe box in a closet—are actually wrong? Do we have faith enough that Jesus is more of an expert on us than they are, and than we are, about ourselves? When we do, it does transform our lives—and brings our Creator great joy.

The invitation God gives us as disciples is to believe that a relationship with God is worth it, and then to believe that we are worth it. Not necessarily because we feel it, but because God says so and paid the price. And when we believe these things, all the treasures of God's freeing, transforming life flow through us. It really is worth it.

Jesus has set no limit. He longs for everyone to find the treasure. And when you have found your Liberty nickel, go ahead and live out of the wealth of soul it provides.

"To God be the glory, great things he has done."

Randy Good is pastor at Taftsville (Vt.) Chapel Mennonite Fellowship.

An important reminder

James Schrag is executive director for the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board.

An important reminder arrived in today's mail. I was copied on a letter sent from an area conference leader to a newspaper editor of a midwestern city who had written about a Mennonite congregation's new facility dedication. "I would like to correct a mis-assumption," the area conference leader wrote. "Mennonite Church USA is a denomination, not a sect, as incorrectly referred to in the story."

How is this an important reminder? It reminds me that, in the eyes of our American culture, Mennonites are still viewed as anomalies, as something our American democratic tradition has generously "made room for." Unfortunately our record as Mennonites has painstakingly earned this recognition. Our penchant for restricting ourselves to local forms of identity and witness, combined with our notable efforts to remain pure through separation and division, have left an indelible mark upon us. Those among whom we have lived, some for up to 300 years in this place, all too accurately read this mark.

> **People in the pew carry a natural ability to recognize the unity of Christian faith and witness, unencumbered by the politics of church institutionalism.**

The individualism expressed in our history that leads others to call us a sect is not without its redeeming features, however. Most of the prophets of old appeared to be individualists, fitting the sect type, carrying nonconformist and age-changing messages of either doom or hope. But a closer look at these prophets reveals that they were not just out to protect their own purity or to call attention to themselves by delivering a dissenting word. These prophets were called by God to build the unity of God's people for a purpose much larger than mere preservation of something dear to them. That larger purpose in their prophetic call was (and is) nothing less than the unifying purposes of God.

We Mennonites, steeped in our individualistic cultural forms, have been slow to realize that the scope of our witness has seldom exceeded the scope of our subcultures. Certain exceptions to this rule, such as the remarkable growth of Mennonite identity and witness around the world in people of other cultures, may be partly due to the fact that in these new places the sect label was never nurtured and thus never applied.

In light of all this, what we are trying to model and deliver in Mennonite Church USA is remarkable. Our newfound efforts to find, live and embody Christian unity, departing from our purist forms of disunity of the past, does not add up to some grand concession, grudgingly made, to achieve our self-preservation. Rather, at the beginning of the 21st century we have chosen to pursue the audacious notion (for Mennonites, at least) that an individualistic sect-type image of witness limits us too much in our calling to be God's agents of healing and hope in a broken world.

I hesitate to call all this a new movement. It is more properly viewed as a sign of hope. We are still tied to our preferences for individualism as Mennonites. Achieving a new organizational unity in Mennonite Church USA does not guarantee that we are successfully released from our past addictions that were fed by a sect-type mentality. In our new church organization we still struggle to find release from some of our past habits of castle building rather than kingdom building.

For the churchwide-leader types like me who are tempted to engage in castle building rather than kingdom building, the best antidote may come from people in the pew. They carry a natural ability to recognize the unity of Christian faith and witness, unencumbered by the politics of church institutionalism. Many display little interest in making distinctions between a mission agency and an education agency. They are not sure it is worth their effort to find the "best" Mennonite college for their offspring. They do not readily distinguish between the work of Mennonite Central Committee and the auspices of Mennonite Church USA. They prefer to view things as one, not as many. Their need is to find a unity of purpose and application of the gospel of Jesus Christ to a world that wants and needs more than sects (or institutions) who try to be carriers of God's truth in Jesus.

Denomination or sect? If either word limits the power of God through us, let's take a second look, but let's take that second look together. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Thinking about race**—Julie Prey-Harbaugh
- **Can anything good come out of Philadelphia?** —Leonard Dow
- **Black history: Who needs it?**—Freeman Miller

Immigrant program builds bridges for newcomers and Virginia Mennonites

Susannah Gerber Lepley didn't know that being a missionary kid would matter to her as an adult. But it prepared her to become program director at NewBridges, an immigrant resource center in Virginia Conference.

Lepley moved from Brazil back to the United States with her folks, Bob and Fran Gerber, when she was in seventh grade. After the family served with the former Mennonite Board of Missions for eight years, she felt lost in North America.

"I didn't know how to handle the junior high system: what was cool, what was OK," Lepley says. "What worked fine in Brazil just didn't work in the States. But as painful as that time was, it gave me lots of compassion for immigrants who face all kinds of things that are much more intense than what I faced."

Each year, NewBridges—based in Harrisonburg, Va., and supported by about half a dozen Mennonite congregations in the conference and Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions—helps more than 130 families find their way through the maze of a new culture. Lepley, assistant Guadalupe Morales and volunteers help the immigrants deal with language issues, secure jobs, find child care, utilize social services, receive financial training and find medical and educational resources.

Most immigrants in the Harrisonburg area are from Latin America. The next largest groups are Ukrainian and Kurdish. They are drawn by the large agribusiness industry as well as food service and janitorial positions at several local universities. Statistics show that about 8 percent of Harrisonburg's 40,000 people is Hispanic and that 26 languages are spoken within the public schools.

Some congregations initially tried church planting, but they soon saw that providing better access to social services and language learning would meet more acute needs. "Immigrants tend to settle relatively easily within church families that already exist," says NewBridges board chair Elroy Miller, who is also professor of sociology and social work at Eastern Mennonite University. "But they find it more difficult to meet basic needs because of words they don't understand, applications they can't fill out, services they can't find."

Lepley and Miller don't soften the rough edges when they describe issues that immigrants face. "The stereotype is that immigrants who are undocumented are lazy and just don't want to do what it takes to become a citizen, but that simply isn't true," Lepley says. "So many of these people are very hard-working, but since 9-11 it's really hard to get citizenship. ... Right now, it's very hard for people from Latin America to get asylum or refugee status. ... And the waiting period for applying for U.S. citizenship can take as long as up to 12 years."

Mennonite Church USA News Service

A client cuts fruit in a nutrition class offered by NewBridges, an immigrant resource center in Harrisonburg, Va.

Employment issues also bring hardships. "It's really shocking to see what they have to do in poultry processing plants for between $7 and $9 an hour, but it is one of the main jobs available to those who can't speak English," Lepley says. "But that's not all they do. There are also about 30 to 40 immigrant-run businesses here, including restaurants, grocery stores, a Spanish version of a Dollar General, clothing stores, beauty shops and bakery shops."

To help the larger Mennonite community understand these and other aspects of the immigrants' world, NewBridges, developed by Mennonite Central Committee, sponsors four learning tours to the area each year.

"The tour participants learn about immigration trends and why people leave their countries and come here," Lepley says. "We also invite immigrants to share stories about what they've come through and about their dreams for the future. We try to bridge the two communities as much as possible.

"What's so amazing is when immigrants, who are generally very shy, open up. When they realize people care and want to listen, a floodgate of emotions comes tumbling out."

Lepley

Not only has NewBridges built a bridge between cultures, but it has also built a bridge for Mennonites in Virginia Conference between the denomination's priority of being missional and what it means to apply that to individual lives and local congregations.

"Being connected to these immigrants from around the world fills my hunger for being involved in missions," Lepley says. "I'm a missionary kid, and I just wouldn't be happy not being connected in some way, and if I didn't do this here at home, I'd go overseas."—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Reluctant church planters opening the door to Christ in North Carolina

Keith Nice stood outside his Graham, N.C., house in a nasty thunderstorm and chastised the sky that battered and soaked his piñata, popped or blew away his balloons and drove his yard party into the garage.

The yard party was to have been the grand finale of the Nice family's five-evening Backyard Bible School, one of a series of events that Keith and Tami Nice have hosted in recent months in their continuing efforts to attract friends and neighbors to join them in Christian fellowship.

They wince at the designation "church planters." But, by default, that is what they have become. If they're still in discernment, their 4-year-old son, Jacob, knows what it's about. One day he stood waiting on the front porch, holding open the door, expectantly looking out.

"What are you doing?" his mother asked. "Come in and shut the door."

"I'm waiting for the people to come," Jacob said.

The Nices are metaphorically holding open the door, waiting for the people to come.

Keith, reflecting on the washed-out Bible school activities, says, "I felt like God was reminding me, 'Remember when you were standing in the rain yelling at me? What did you mean by your party? This is my party. You can't control the wind. You can't control the rain. You can't build a church any more than you can control the weather. If I want to see a church plant in Graham, it isn't because of your clever ideas. Just stand out of the way and watch the door.' "

> If there's going to be a Mennonite church in Graham, it's not going to be a place for displaced Mennonites.
> —Tami Nice

The Nices are part of a group of Mennonite-affiliated partners that last winter received a $21,000 City on a Hill grant through Mennonite Mission Network. A grant oversight committee is discussing possibilities—perhaps an Anabaptist resource center and a student center as a kind of thought-hatchery for those who long for more peaceful alternatives to conflict or thirst for faith in something, or a theology they can embrace.

Graham is a small town midway between Greensboro and Durham, where, with help from congregations in those two bigger towns, the Nices are active in a ministry that doesn't cost much more than the price of a tureen of soup to serve when guests arrive.

They didn't start out intending to plant a church, Tami says; it was the windfall of the City on a Hill program that caused the couple to start thinking that way. Overseers "kept us accountable, kept us moving along with other programs," she says.

Along the way, the Nices have come in contact with Methodists who "don't really go to church" and people who are "kind of New Agey" and followers of the Ba'Hai faith and a woman whose husband "doesn't believe in organized religion" but felt she needed to "find an organized faith," Tami says.

Mennonite Mission Network photo by Paul Godshall

Tami Nice leads children during the five-evening neighborhood Bible school they conducted in Graham, N.C. As a result of a City on a Hill grant, Nice and her husband, Keith, have become church planters in the area.

"If there's going to be a Mennonite church in Graham, it's not going to be a place for displaced Mennonites," she says. "God put so many people in our path, expressing these needs that just aren't being met."

So last summer, Tami followed a longtime calling to minister to women and led a women's Bible study class that introduced many young moms to the Scriptures.

In July, Keith and Tami hosted their Backyard Bible School, which attracted children and moms who weren't committed Christian believers but had decided their children could do with some Bible education.

In August, they invited "Drumming for Peace" guru Leo Hartshorn to town. Hartshorn, minister of peace and justice for Mennonite Mission Network, held a preaching-and-drumming revival billed as "A Joyful Noise" in a local Presbyterian church that attracted about 50 people. Youth from Durham Mennonite Church cooled the parched percussionists with an ice-cream social.

In October and November, the Nices hosted an eight-week study series in their home, called "Boundaries with Kids," using videos they had borrowed from Virginia Mennonite Resource Center. That endeavor attracted about eight couples.

All the while, the Nices have been urged and assisted by members of Mennonite congregations down both directions of U.S. Highway 40: Greensboro Mennonite Fellowship west of Graham and Durham Mennonite Church to the east.—*Charles T. Jones of Mennonite Mission Network*

MCC helps healing at Baghdad hospital

In devastated country, $30,000 provides supplies and replaces equipment.

Once among the best in the region, Iraq's health-care system has been devastated by three wars, 13 years of international sanctions and minimal state support. Within the warren of stark basement corridors in Baghdad's sprawling Mansour Pediatric Hospital, workers in the small laboratory had taken to washing test tubes, even disposable ones, by hand. They were never sure when they would be able to purchase more supplies, and their equipment for sterilizing lab materials was broken.

Drugs have also become precious treasures. In a refrigerated mini-storeroom, packets of expired medicines are ready for emergency use if new supplies are depleted. For years this has been normal operating procedure.

But in post-war Iraq, medical assistance for the hospital is slowly increasing. Through its partner Aide Medicale International, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) last year provided Mansour Pediatric with new lab equipment and repairs worth $30,000. Of this amount, $2,000 U.S. was used to buy local supplies, such as test tubes, syringes and chemicals, for functioning equipment, while $28,000 was used for repairing or buying equipment, including a spectrophotometer used for chemical analysis, and an autoclave, which sterilizes lab materials.

"There are two impacts," says David Pankratz, MCC emergency consultant in Iraq. "Some tests which they were unable to do before they are now able to do; and the test results are now more reliable.

"For the patient this intervention means faster, more accurate diagnosis. Before, there might have been some equipment, but not the consumables like reagents [chemical agents used in diagnostic lab work] needed to make the tests."

That makes a world of difference, say the health professionals at Mansour. Previously, in many cases, doctors had to wait until a patient reached an acute stage of illness to be able to make a diagnosis. Soon after the war ended earlier this year, physician Selma Haddad and laboratory director Wisam Abed identified lab equipment as the most important need.

Throughout the 1970s and '80s until the Gulf War, Iraq's medical services were among the best in the region. For these doctors—part of a large, accomplished professional class in Iraq—watching the decline of the health-care system has been painful.

MCC has had a long relationship with the hospital, delivering cancer medicines in 1998 to help fight a growing wave of childhood leukemia. At the time, 600 cancer patients were being treated at Mansour, one of only four centers in Iraq for malignant cases.

MCC photo by David Pankratz

Mansour Pediatric Hospital lab technician Rajaa Alb AlKraim operates a spectrophotometer, used for chemical analysis, that Mennonite Central Committee purchased for the Baghdad hospital.

Equipment was in poor shape, and replacements were often unobtainable. Under U.N. sanctions, vital diagnosis and treatment items were often excluded from a series or delivered late. If one or two items were missing, explained Haddad, prognoses dropped dramatically.

Some tests which they were unable to do before they are now able to do; and the test results are now more reliable.
—Dave Pankratz

Three wars have devastated Iraq's infrastructure and economy and damaged the environment and the general health of the population.

But, says Pankratz, "almost every problem at the hospital was a result of the way international sanctions were applied over 13 years, not a result of the recent war." One facet of this was what the American and British governments chose to allow into Iraq; the other was the way in which Saddam Hussein's government used its resources.

"Ultimately, the result was that children died at this hospital," Pankratz says.

MCC's intervention is making an impact. The washing of test tubes by hand has stopped. With the new reagents, quick, accurate diagnoses can be made.

Mansour is still in need of the more advanced equipment that is standard in Western health-care systems. For now, with the help of MCC and others, the hospital will try to keep its equipment running and maintain a steady stock of essential supplies.—*Edward Miller for MCC News Service*

Pat Houmphan (left), a Mennonite Church Canada mission worker in Thailand, visits with a family that is participating in a cattle-lending program that was started with seed money from Bethesda Mennonite Church in Henderson, Neb.

Mennonite Church Canada photo by Gordon Janzen

Growing herds and church in Thailand

Cattle-lending program started to help sustain local group of Christians.

In Thailand, $5,500 goes a long way. With the seed money from Bethesda Mennonite Church in Henderson, Neb., Mennonite Church Canada mission workers Pat and Rad Houmphan in Borabur, Thailand, are moving a local congregation toward self-sufficiency while helping local farmers.

A church committee of local Issan people coordinates the project. They have already purchased 12 cows, which have been lent out to believers. Recipients keep the first and third calves, but the second calf and the mother are to be returned to the project.

Being a completely rural church, isolated from urban employment possibilities, local Christians have limited incomes. Having so few resources makes it difficult for the church to support a pastor, pay for a church building or provide transportation for children coming to Sunday school. Pat is excited about the income-generating potential of the cow-lending project as a first start in gaining financial security for the church.

Other pieces of the ministry are falling into place, too. Pat now works with an energetic young seminary graduate, Jadet Kampansri, who is Issan. An elderly evangelist known as Grandpa Nah continues his half-time ministry in the area.

The Houmphans relate to believers in numerous villages with two main meeting places in Borabur and Ban Daeng. Two baptisms were celebrated in Ban Daeng last Easter Sunday, but Pat says growth in both churches is slow.

"Very few [Issan people] are practicing believers," he says. "They will say, 'I am Buddhist, my parents are Buddhist, so we are just Buddhist.'

"Two main things that I use to tell them [about Christianity]: In Buddhism, there is no talking about creation. It's very important that we address that, the creation story. Secondly I tell them about Jesus Christ. In Buddhism, there is no Lord and Savior."

Despite the local economic difficulties and slow growth, the Houmphans are clear about their vision. They hope to establish a group of churches in each of the seven to 10 surrounding districts over the next 20 years. One way to do that, says Pat, is to show the *Jesus* movie. "Issan people don't like to read, but they love to watch," he says. "The *Jesus* movie is helpful."*—Dan Dyck of Mennonite Church Canada News Service*

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Police officers consider peace role, beliefs

Can you be a Mennonite and a police officer? The eight police officers who met at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., on Nov. 29, 2003, answered that question with a resounding "yes!"

In fact, these officers, all of whom attend Mennonite or Brethren in Christ churches, see their primary task as peacemaking. The six men and two women talked about their vocation and faith at a Christian Officers' Peace Seminar, hosted by Mennonite Central Committee Ontario and the Peace and Conflict Studies program at Conrad Grebel.

The fishbowl format had eight officers sit in a circle to discuss the issues, while 12 people sat in an outer circle to listen in.

The officers indicated how they resonate with the Anabaptist vision of peace: They see themselves as "peace officers." One person commented, "Many Mennonites would be good teachers of future police officers."

"Keeping the peace" includes intervening in domestic conflicts, landlord-tenant disputes and neighborhood feuds. Studies suggest that 85 percent of policing is of a noncriminal nature. Police are called to problem-solve, hold people accountable and call on social services to help maintain healthy communities.

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The group emphasized that police officers, unlike soldiers, are not trained to kill. "The absolute smallest aspect of police work is the gun," said one officer.

Someone added: "Most officers would prefer not to wear a gun at all. It is weighty, both literally and figuratively." As police officers contemplate situations of real or potential violence, they ask themselves, "What action can I take that will turn out positive?"

Women officers, especially, focus on talking and defusing a situation, rather than a display of force. Men might be more tempted to try to gain a physical upper hand. All agreed, however, that force is the last resort.

"Mennonites have valued conflict mediation, but have not seen so clearly how we have this work in common with police officers."

The officers were drawn to passages such as Romans 13 which speaks of the law as God-given for human good. Morley Lymburner, a former policeman, now edits *Blue Line,* a national law enforcement magazine. In an editorial in the June 2003 issue titled "Whose Side Is God on Anyway?" he says: "Since first reading [Romans 13] over 25 years ago, I have concluded that it can do much good but also much harm. My first error was to consider it a message to me and all police officers that what we're doing is divinely inspired. I've since realized that although the profession can take some solace from it, there's no direct support for all police actions."

The matter of lethal force came up repeatedly because that is the aspect of police work most clearly at odds with Anabaptist understandings. Most of these officers were not raised in the Mennonite church, where they might have confronted roadblocks to considering this profession.

These officers feel they have been called of God to do what they are doing. One said he takes strength from John the Baptist's words to soldiers who responded to the call to repent: "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages" (Luke 3:14). In other words, Christian police officers, like those soldiers, are called to do their work with integrity.

Those in the "outer circle" were invited in the last hour to respond. They were clearly moved by the sincerity and spiritual integrity of the participants and were grateful that the conversation could take place. "Mennonites have valued conflict mediation but have not seen so clearly how we have this work in common with police officers," said one observer.

"I appreciated the sense of awareness of context in all you do and also the awareness of the need for mutual accountability," said another.

Plans are already underway for a similar seminar involving lawyers within Anabaptist churches. *—Canadian Mennonite*

WORKERS

Brubaker, Verle A., was installed Dec. 14 as pastor of Holly Grove Mennonite Church, Westover, Md.

Claudio, Samuel Sr., was ordained Nov. 30 as Spanish pastor of Grace Mennonite Church, Lansdale, Pa.

Stoltzfus, Noah S., ended Nov. 30 as pastor of Zion Mennonite Church, Birdsboro, Pa.

Yoder, Nelson S., was ordained Nov. 16 as associate pastor of Ridgeview Mennonite Church, Gordonville, Pa., and as conference minister of Atlantic Coast Conference.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Boshart, Konner J., May 26, to Travis and Ginae Nofziger Boshart, Shedd, Ore.

Clemmer, Peyton Elizabeth, Dec. 15, to Christopher and Corey Sell Clemmer, Souderton, Pa.

Diller, Kyle Jacob, Oct. 16, to Mark and Denise Kauffman Diller, Lebanon, Ore.

Eby, Emily Karen, Nov. 11, to Calvin and Gloria Fisher Eby, Gap, Pa.

Epp, Timothy Wade, Dec. 1, to John and Beth Sawtell Epp, Marion, S.D.

Ferrell, Rebekah Josephine, Oct. 30, to Tim and Rebekah Smith Ferrell, Newport News, Va.

Gascho, Jaden Levi, Dec. 12, to Dewayne and Valerie Melch Gascho, Cairo, Neb.

Greiser, Kyle Andrew, Dec. 5, to James and Melissa Greiser, Souderton, Pa.

Groff, Ethan Scott, Dec. 1, to Eric and Glenda Newswanger Groff, Lancaster, Pa.

Hochstedler, Hope Marie, Nov. 9, to Rex and Angie Nofziger Hochstedler, Goshen, Ind.

Janzen, Cassie Marie, Nov. 30, to Virgil and Tammie Lantz Janzen, Lincoln, Neb.

Kasitz, Kyle Daniel, Dec. 3, to Todd and Debbie Epp Kasitz, Wichita, Kan.

Litwiller, Jack Henry, Dec. 11, to Chad and Tanya Schmidgall Litwiller, Hopedale, Ill.

Lyter, Luke Joseph, Dec. 8, to Larry and Cheyna Byler Lyter, Belleville, Pa.

Miller, Collin John, Dec. 15, to Matt and Renae Bender Miller, Iowa City, Iowa.

Miller, Cristiana Faith (stillborn) and Ellie Grace (twins), Nov. 29, to Steve and Stephanie Miller, Bloomington, Ind.

Padilla, Sarah Lynn, Dec. 15, to Luis and Sharla Young-Kolb Padilla, Hesston, Kan.

Peachey, Marcus Lee, Nov. 17, to Dion and Natacha Briceno Peachey, Harrisonburg, Va.

Regier, Jace Philip, Nov. 7, to Phil and Kami White Regier, Hesston, Kan.

Reichenbach, Jonah Douglas, Dec. 6, to Brian Reichenbach and Heather Bachman, Iowa City, Iowa.

Renno, Chloe Noel, Nov. 14, to Brian and Gwen Yoder Renno, Belleville, Pa.

Sadler, Owen Christopher, Dec. 16, to Nate and Jocelyn Hartzler Sadler, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Swartzendruber, Adam Thomas, Nov. 26, to Scott and Angie Pennypacker Swartzendruber, Bloomington, Ill.

Wagner, Caroline Isabelle, Dec. 7, to Jeff and Teresa Schrock Wagner, Hutchinson, Kan.

Zehr, Nicholas Aaron, Oct. 26, to David and Lynne Echtenkamp Zehr, Goshen, Ind.

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Peaks, Parks & Canyons	September 22 - October 9
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MARRIAGES

Alderfer/Hartley: Kendra Lin Alderfer, Pennsburg, Pa., and Peter Eric Hartley, Pennsburg, Dec. 6 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Brunk/Peifer: Rhoda Weber Neer Brunk, Bridgewater, Va., and Clarence Peifer, Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 6 at the bride's home, Bridgewater.

Heatwole/Kauffman: Kelly Heatwole, Harrisonburg, Va., and Phillip Kauffman, Harrisonburg, Dec. 13 at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg.

Kennel/Martin: Carissa Kennel, New Holland, Pa., and Ryan Martin, Ephrata, Pa., Dec. 13 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

DEATHS

Becker, Norma C., 78, Hesston, Kan., died Nov. 24. Spouse: Edwin Becker. Parents: Jacob and Laura Shenk. Children: Loren Snyder, Cheryl Nussbaum, Jerre Snyder; step-children Elizabeth Hershberger, Martha Yoder, Daniel Becker; eight grandchildren; nine step-grandchildren; eight step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 28 at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston.

Beechy, Olive, 94, Walnut Creek, Ohio, died Dec. 9. Spouse: Ralph Beechy (deceased). Parents: David and Ada Mast. Children: Suzanne Kauffman, David, Debbie; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 13 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Birkey, Harold C., 85, Delavan, Ill., died Dec. 22. Spouse: Arneitta Birky Birkey. Parents: Levi and Laura Mast Birkey. Children: John, Mark; three grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 27 at Hopedale (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Bridge, Ruby Fox, 80, Stuarts Draft, Va., died Nov. 10 of pancreatitis. Spouse: Reginald Bridge (deceased). Parents: Gilbert and Mary Tomlin Fox. Funeral: Nov. 14 at Mountain View Mennonite Church, Lyndhurst, Va.

Eby, Karen Gayle, 26, Lancaster, Pa., died Oct. 15. Parents: John E. and Audrey Hartzler Eby. Funeral: Oct. 19 at Stumptown Mennonite Church, Bird-In-Hand, Pa.

Friesen, George T., 89, Henderson, Neb., died Sept. 21. Spouse: Elizabeth Epp Friesen. Parents: Thomas and Katie Klippenstein Friesen. Children: Marlyn, Clayton, Myra Heegle; seven grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 25 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Friesen, Laverna L., 82, Freeman, S.D., died Nov. 23. Spouse: Wilbur Friesen. Parents: Lewis and Bertha Miller Waltner. Children: Ila Mebius, Nita Short; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 26 at Salem Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Godshall, Hannah L. Moyer, 92, Sellersville, Pa., died Dec. 1. Spouse: Marvin K. Godshall (deceased). Parents: Ulysses and Ella Landis Moyer. Children: Walter M., Clyde M., Arvin M., Grace M. Moyer, Betty G. Landis, Miriam G. Derstine, Thelma M. Bergey, Alda G. Kratz; 38 grandchildren; 128 great-grandchildren; eight great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 6 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Goering, Anna Goebel, 103, Hesston, Kan., died Dec. 19. Spouse: Herbert A. Goering (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Lydia Goebel. Child: JoAnn Wickstrom; two grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 23 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Goering, Robert M., 77, Inman, Kan., died Dec. 8 following an accident. Spouse: Ruby Stucky Goering. Parents: Peter and Elma Kaufman Goering. Children: Steven, Michael, Greg; 10 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 12 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman.

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Graber, Floyd, 92, Freeman, S.D., died Dec. 17. Spouse: Edna Preheim Graber (deceased). Parents: Peter B. and Lizzie Graber. Children: Sherman, Lavonne Tieszen, Marlys Tieszen, Sharon Schamber; 11 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 22 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Groff, Mary M., 85, Ephrata, Pa., died Sept. 14. Spouse: Rohrer M. Groff (deceased). Parents: Tilman H. and Alice Miller Stauffer. Children: Earl, Miriam Groff Harnish, Mary Kathryn Groff Gehman, Ruth Groff Zimmerman; nine grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 17 at Stumptown Mennonite Church, Bird-In-Hand, Pa.

Hatter, Saylor Austin, 66, Stuarts Draft, Va., died Dec. 2 of a stroke. Spouse: Janice Turner Hatter. Parents: Saylor F. and Pearl Coffey Hatter. Children: Matthew, Sherry Hatter-Miller, Deborah Kurnat, Lisa Fisher; five grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 6 at Mountain View Mennonite Church, Lyndhurst, Va.

Hughes, Virginia Courtney, 65, Waynesboro, Va., died Dec. 12 of cancer. Parents: Paul R. and Mary Clark Courtney. Children: Teresa Bones, Anna Myers; four grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 14 at Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro.

Jantzen, Henry E., 78, Beatrice, Neb., died Nov. 29. Spouse: Gretl Ott Jantzen. Parents: Henry B. and Margaret Ensz Jantzen. Children: Vern, Glen, Sara Peters, Mark, Eric; 10 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 4 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice.

Kinsinger, Maynard Stanley, 84, Wellman, Iowa, died Dec. 7 from cancer. Spouse: Nora Doolin Kinsinger. Parents: John and Katie Gingerich Kinsinger. Children: Linda Anders, Eddie; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 10 at Wellman Mennonite Church.

Lapp, Florence Heinly, 90, Paradise, Pa., died Dec. 14. Spouse: Jacob Lapp, Sr. (deceased). Parents: Warren and Ella Hafer Heinly. Children: Alverda Zook, Jacob S. (Jr.), H. Edwin; seven grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; six great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 17 at Furman Funeral Home, Leola, Pa.

Miller, Viola Wiley, 96, Grantsville, Md., died Dec. 4. Spouse: Roy Miller (deceased). Parents: Milton and Ellen Arnold Wiley. Children: Leona Bender, Virginia Brenneman, Darlene; 16 grandchildren; 50 great-grandchildren; nine great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 7 at Springs (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Oberly, Richard W., 78, McPherson, Kan., died Dec. 18. Spouse: Beverly Beaupry Oberly. Parents: Millard and Sophia Eisenbach Oberly. Children: Sherri Sinders, Amber Stucky, Dick; 10 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 22 at First Mennonite Church, McPherson.

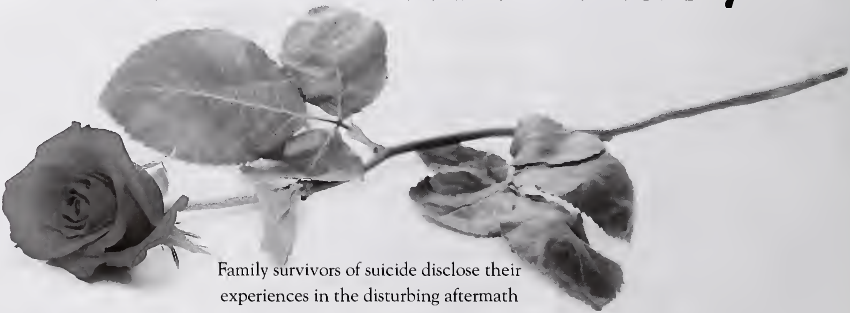
Penner, D. Alvin, 80, Butterfield, Minn., died Dec. 20 of a brain tumor. Spouse: Arline Heppner Penner. Parents: Bernard and Maria Harder Penner. Children: Patricia Derksen, Carol Meyer, James, Terry; nine grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 24 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minn.

Rice, Marjorie, 84, Orrville, Ohio, died Nov. 28. Spouse: (1st) William Clark (deceased), (2nd) William Rice (deceased). Parents: Ernest and Alice Cassidy. Children: William Clark, Richard Clark, Edna Yoder; 14 grandchildren; 38 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 2 at Smithville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Risser, Lucille Stroman, 96, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 24. Spouse: J.D. Risser (deceased). Parents: Dale and Velma Stroman. Child: Sally Jo. Funeral: Sept. 27 at Yoder-Culp Funeral Home, Goshen.

Schulz, Gladys Schertz, 83, Mt. Sterling, Ill., died Dec. 7. Spouse: Albert H. Schulz (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Blanche Imhoff Shertz. Child: Billie Jean Chambers. Funeral: Dec. 11 at Hendricker Funeral Home, Mt. Sterling.

Snyder, Lucille Steiner, 83, Akron, Pa., died Dec. 11. Spouse: William T. Snyder (deceased). Parents: Calvin and Luella Burkholder Steiner. Children: Sharon C., Margaret J. Sprunger, William; three grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 16 at Akron Mennonite Church.



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Troyer, Alvin N., 75, Walnut Creek, Ohio, died Dec. 4 of cancer. Spouse: Oletha R. Hamsher Troyer. Parents: Noah and Elizabeth Schlabach Troyer. Children: Sheryl Hostetler, Darryl; five grandchildren. Memorial service: Dec. 6 at Countryside Chapel, Baltic, Ohio.

Unruh, Raymond Lee, 82, Hesston, Kan., died Dec. 13. Spouse: Loulsla Cummings Unruh. Parents: Harry and Lena Schultz Unruh. Funeral: Dec. 16 at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston.

Weaver, Marion, 82, Walnut Creek, Ohio, died Oct. 25. Spouse: Orpha Ellen Miller Weaver. Parents: Andrew and Katie Miller Weaver. Children: Bob, Jim, Bill, Max; nine grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 28 at Walnut Creek (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Widrick, Pearl Steria, 78, Croghan, N.Y., died Dec. 5. Spouse: Hilary Widrick (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Helena Steria. Children: Kenneth, Patti Jantzi, Sandra Gozda, Wanda Roggie; 14 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 9 at Croghan Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Esther N., 91, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 19. Spouse: Maynard C. Yoder (deceased). Parents: William and Mary Everest Hartman. Children: Shirley Hershberger, Wendell, Wayne, Stanley, Roger; 12 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 22 at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind.

Yoder, Judith Pyle, 65, Springs, Pa., died Nov. 24. Spouse: Richard Yoder. Parents: Jack and Grace Bodes Pyle. Children: Angela Piwonka, Andrew; three grandchildren. Memorial service: Nov. 29 at Springs Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Roy, 90, Sugarcreek, Ohio, died Dec. 6. Spouse: Orpha Sommers Yoder. Parents: Albert and Iva Duncan Yoder. Children: William S., Roy J., Lillian Kauffman; five grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 9 at Walnut Creek (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

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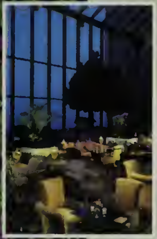

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Bluffton College seeks applications for the position of ***assistant campus pastor/spiritual life coordinator.*** This person will work closely with the campus pastor to attend to the spiritual needs and care of the campus-wide community and work closely with various student religious life groups. Other duties will involve assisting with planning for a variety of workshop settings, working with the church relations department in the coordination of off-campus ministry groups and assist in a variety of programs related to the Pathways initiative (i.e. women in ministry, sophomore retreat). Applicants should have a committed faith in Jesus Christ and a love for college-age young adults. A Master of Divinity degree is preferred along with related ministry experience and an appreciation for the Anabaptist-Mennonite peace church expression of the Christian faith. This position is an initiative of the Pathways to Mission and Vocation initiative funded through a Lilly Grant.

Send letter of application, resumé and three references to Don Schweingruber, Vice President and Dean of Student Life, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Suite 1, Bluffton, OH 45817. Applications should be received by March 1. Bluffton College reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. People who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

Central California Mennonite Residential Services in Fresno, Calif., seeks a full-time ***executive director.*** CCMRS provides residential services and programs to persons with developmental disabilities. It is affiliated with West Coast MCC and with Mennonite Health Services. Deadline for applications is March 1.

For further information and application forms please contact Ken Janzen, Board of Directors, Central Calif. Mennonite Residential Services, P. O. Box 5298, Fresno, CA 93755-5298; email ccmrs@mindspring.com.

Pittsburgh Mennonite Church seeks a full-time ***pastor.*** Located in western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh is a city with a relatively low cost of living, a wide variety of cultural and outdoor activities and world-class hospitals and universities. PMC is an energetic, young and growing congregation that seeks to follow Christ in daily life. We are looking for a pastor that is called to leading in a culturally diverse area, with strong leadership, preaching and counseling skills.

Confidential responses should be sent to Miriam Ramer, Chair of the Pastoral Search Committee. Email ramer@juno.com, call 412-441-9152 or mail resumé to 6614 Jackson St., Pittsburgh, PA 15206.

The Peace and Conflict Studies program at Conrad Grebel University College,
a Mennonite church-affiliated college at the University of Waterloo,
seeks to fill a full-time continuing faculty position at the
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level, to begin July 2004. Peace and Conflict Studies is an interdisciplinary, undergraduate program at the University of Waterloo. Candidates should possess a PhD in a field related to peace and conflict studies and have teaching and research expertise in one or more of the following areas: theories of peace and conflict; theories and practice of conflict resolution; international studies; global development; human rights. The candidate's ability to teach in another area of the humanities or social sciences is desirable. Applications should contain a cover letter detailing teaching and research expertise, a curriculum vitae, names of three referees, and other evidence of the candidate's suitability for the position. Applicants should be sympathetic to the traditions and beliefs of the Mennonite church. The Search Committee will begin reviewing applications on February 27, 2004.

Please direct all inquiries and applications to:
Marlene Epp, Academic Dean, Conrad Grebel University
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N2L 3G6, mgepp@uwaterloo.ca 519-885-0220 x257
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In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed first of all to Canadian citizens and permanent residents of Canada. Conrad Grebel University College is committed to principles of employment equity.

Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio, is seeking candidates for the full-time position of ***minister of youth.*** Candidates should have strong Anabaptist beliefs and have a passion for children, youth and young adults. Full job description is available by contacting Kelvin Friesen at 419-445-0856 or kelfriesen@rtecexpress.net.

Goshen College is accepting applications for a tenure-track position in ***music upper strings.*** Responsibilities include applied instruction in violin and viola, chamber music and strings methods. Related areas of teaching may include but not be limited to music theory, music history and music appreciation. Additional teaching in the Community School of the Arts of Goshen College is available. A doctorate is preferred; master's required. Strong interest in and record of successful recruiting is preferred. Candidate should be an active performer and have evidence of successful teaching at the college level. Candidate needs to have a vision for growing a quality program in a state-of-the-art facility. Applications will be reviewed beginning Feb. 1. The appointment will begin July 1.

To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, www.goshen.edu/employment. Women and minority persons are especially encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Administrative and teaching faculty members are expected to share this commitment.

Mennonite Village seeks a ***foundation director*** with excellent interpersonal and communication skills. Experience in development and fund raising preferred. Contact Ron Litwiller, Mennonite Village, 5353 Columbus St. SE, Albany, OR 97322. Email ron@mennonitevillage.org; Web site: www.mennonitevillage.org.

Goshen College Education Department is seeking a full-time tenure-track ***assistant professor in education*** position beginning August 2004. This position will be responsible for oversight of and teaching in the middle school and secondary education programs, both field placements and on-campus courses. This position requires a team player, interested in integrative curriculum and instruction and with skills in administration that could hone and refine middle school and secondary programs. All members of the department work with prospective students, advise and serve on institution-wide committees. Doctorate in education preferred, with a minimum of three years successful teaching experience in 5-12. Candidates should have interest in and proficiency in program development and evaluation as well as teaching, excellent aptitude and ability in teaching and administration, good skills in speaking and writing, public relations and computers.

To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, www.goshen.edu/employment. Women and minority persons are especially encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Administrative and teaching faculty members are expected to share this commitment.

MCC, VNCS and EMM Vietnam alumni are invited to celebrate Mennonite Central Committee's ***50 years of work in Vietnam*** on July 9-11, 2004, in Hanoi, Vietnam. For more information or to register, contact Diane Gehman by email <deg@mcc.org> or by mail at MCC, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking qualified applicants for the position of ***director of human resources.*** The position will be responsible for the overall activities related to the human resources function for approximately 350 staff and faculty located primarily in Harrisonburg, Va. A bachelor's degree required; master's degree and/or certification in Human Resource Management preferred. Ten years of experience in human resources with at least five years at a director level. Strong communication and interpersonal skills, analytical and organization skills are required. For more information visit our Web site at www.emu.edu.

Send letter of application, resume and three references to Ronald E. Piper, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; fax 540-432-4141. Review will begin Jan. 30. EMU reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. Persons who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

Western Mennonite School Board of Directors has announced a search for applicants for the position of ***principal*** to begin July 2004. Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students both local and at a distance. Located on 45 acres in the Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience with a comprehensive vision for expanding enrollment, program and facilities. Requests for information can be addressed to Search Committee, Western Mennonite School, 9045 Wallace Road NW, Salem, OR 97304; wmsoffice@telelport.com.

Nampa Mennonite Church, an established church in Idaho with a 100-year history and about 100 in regular attendance, is prayerfully seeking a full-time ***pastor.*** The church is located in a fast-growing area with various outdoor recreational activities nearby. Applicants should have a calling to service in areas of preaching, teaching, evangelism, encouragement and discipleship.

Please contact Everett Earnest, 14678 Woosley Drive, Nampa, ID 83651; phone 208-466-7450; email pastorsearch@nampamennonitechurch.com or esq@access4less.net.

Mennonite Central Committee is accepting applications for the position of ***MCC Central States executive director.*** The director provides vision and oversight for all MCC programs in Central States. Familiarity with MCC constituency, strong relational administrative skills and cultural competency required. Experience with budgeting, administration, Spanish language skills preferred. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply. Significant travel time within the United States.

Contact Charmayne Brubaker, 717-859-1151, cdb@mcc.org or your nearest MCC office for the full job description. Application review begins February 2004. Position available at that time.

EMU announces faculty openings in the ***education department*** beginning Fall 2004.

Special education: Master's degree in education required; Ph.D. in special education or related field preferred. Candidates must have K-12 experience. Responsibilities include classroom teaching in the graduate and undergraduate programs, student advising, student teacher supervision, university service and ongoing scholarship.

Literacy/early childhood education: Master's degree in education required; Ph.D. or A.B.D. in early education, literacy or related field preferred. Candidates must have K-12 experience. Responsibilities include classroom teaching in the graduate and undergraduate programs focusing on emergent literacy, foundations and assessment of literacy, English as a second language, and early childhood education; student advising; student teacher supervision; university service and ongoing scholarship. Candidates should send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts and three references to Marie S. Morris, Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or email ugdean@emu.edu. http://www.emu.edu. Review will begin immediately.

Main education program director, Lancaster, Pa: Provide leadership to MA in education program and teach courses. Ph.D. required. Responsible for vision, marketing, recruitment and candidate advisement. Position open July 2004. Candidates should send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts and three references to Beryl Brubaker, Academic Provost and Graduate Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or email provost@emu.edu. Review will begin immediately.

EMU seeks faculty with evidence or promise of teaching excellence in a Christian, liberal arts environment, committed to ongoing scholarship, who are familiar with and supportive of Anabaptist/Mennonite Christian faith practices. EMU reserves the right to fill the positions at any time or keep the positions open. AAEO employer. Persons who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

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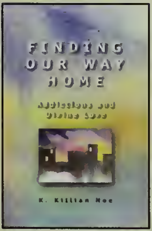

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Why I write about R-rated movies

Gordon Houser

On occasion during the past six years this monthly column has appeared, I have received criticism for including reviews (actually brief comments, for the most part) of R-rated films. Often the comments are not detailed criticism but dismay that we mention such films in any kind of postive light.

One of the main reasons for writing Mediaculture is to encourage readers to be aware of the influences of the larger media and of popular culture. Like other "principalities and powers," these can have both positive and negative effects on our lives. We are all exposed to the broader culture in various ways, and too often we don't think about its influence. By drawing attention to it, I hope to encourage readers to think about their interactions with the culture and its media, whether these are the books they read, the music they listen to, the TV programs they watch, the food they eat or the films they see. If we don't think about these, we are more susceptible to their influences.

I'm aware that many of our readers—and many of our youth—go to movies, including R-rated ones. Too often they don't think about what they are ingesting. While movies are rated according to their content (sex, violence, language, drug use, etc.), some are better than others in presenting a realistic view of life and offering messages of redemption. Many PG-13 movies are worse than many R-rated ones because they present messages of hedonism, disrespect for females and vengeance geared to teenage males. I like to encourage those who do go to movies to consider how well those movies help us think about life in a new way. This is a function of many art forms through the ages. Jesus' parables are an example of such an art form and certainly are profound and challenging. But a film that unrealistically depicts good guys blowing away the bad guys with everything turning out fine does little to deepen our understanding of life.

Film is a powerful medium. It draws us into its world with its images and sound. It absorbs not only our thoughts but our emotions. I do not encourage anyone who is troubled by R-rated content to go to R-rated movies. But for those who feel free to do so, I want them to think about those films and judge them critically.

I have had meaningful conversations with my son (soon to be 21) and his friends about films. For many youth, movies form a common language. Yet for all their film-viewing, there seems to be little discussion about what they watch. Parents and pastors might do well to be in conversation with their youth about movies.

Hollywood Worldviews: Watching Films with Wisdom and Discernment by Brian Godwa (InterVarsity Press, 2002) offers tips for a movie discussion group. Godwa suggests asking about the craft, story and worldview of each film. His appendix, "Sex, Violence and Profanity in the Bible," shows that were the Bible a film, it would be R-rated. He offers other insights and reviews at his Web site, www.godawa.com.

While most films do not present a clear Christian message—however one might define that—many offer perspectives that may help us better understand ourselves and engage our world. For example, *Dirty Pretty Things*, an R-rated film from this past year, brings us into the world of immigrants in London. Their lives are difficult, and they must face unpleasant experiences, ones we find appalling. Yet, while the film does not flinch from showing this reality, it also presents the story of one immigrant, a medical doctor from Nigeria, who tries to live a moral life and treat others with kindness and respect. A strength of the film is that, like all good stories, it shows this rather than preaching it to us.

We are created in the image of the Creator, and art can help us be in touch with the world God has created. At the same time, we must be discerning about the art we experience, the films we watch.

FILMS

The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (PG-13) is a magnificent conclusion to the trilogy of films based on Tolkien's epic fantasy. The coordination of all the elements in this film is a masterful work by director Peter Jackson. Despite the many battle scenes, victory comes via the nonviolent action of disposing of an evil ring. A lesson in simple living.

Cold Mountain (R) is a powerful antiwar film set toward the end of the Civil War and based on Charles Frazier's novel, which is based on Homer's Odyssey. A Confederate soldier journeys home to the woman he loves, while she struggles to survive poverty. Much of the novel's pensive tone is sacrificed to a romantic one, which lessens the impact of the drama.

In America (PG-13) is narrated by the older of two daughters (10 and 8 years old) of an Irish immigrant couple in New York City in the early 1980s. The family is reeling from the death of their young son and brother. The mixture of magical realism and pathos is effective, though at times overdone.

BEST BOOKS OF 2003

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- **The Great Fire: A Novel** by Shirley Hazzard
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- A full-time worker in a minimum-wage job earns less than two-thirds of what it costs to keep a family of four out of poverty.—*The Two Percent Solution: Fixing America's Problems in Ways Liberals and Conservatives Can Love* by Matthew Miller (Public Affairs)
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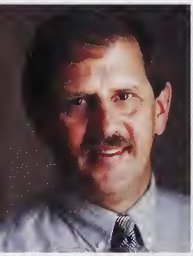

Everett J. Thomas

Bless the teacher

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers.—Ephesians 4:11

If you can read this, thank a teacher. For the skills that earn you a living, thank a teacher. For the knowledge of God's saving presence in our lives, thank the Master Teacher.

The gifts listed by the apostle Paul in Ephesians explicitly includes the role of teacher. Today there are more teachers in the church than pastors or evangelists. In fact, it is through the ministry of teaching that a missional church has one of its greatest opportunities to channel God's healing and hope to the world around us.

Many teachers, in church schools as well as public schools, already know this. Every day through interactions with students, parents and colleagues, their values and convictions are on public display. Every day, through both explicit and implicit conversations, they have extraordinary opportunities to reveal their faith. It is time for the church to recognize and bless this ministry.

Feb. 1 is designated Church Education Sunday for Mennonite Church USA congregations. Usually this day focuses on church schools. However, this year the Mennonite Education Agency asks congregations to broaden their focus. Worship resources distributed by the MEA note that "Christian teachers reflect the wisdom of Jesus Christ, the Master Teacher" and ask us to "celebrate teachers and the ways in which we all teach and learn."

Teaching is a vocation as sacred as the calling to pastor, evangelize or prophesy.

Teachers are at a growth edge of the church. Whether in an elementary classroom or teaching graduate courses, the role of teacher—still respected in our culture—carries great significance. Those with a calling to teach are stewards of considerable power and influence; both are important resources for engaging others who are not Christian or for mentoring those whose faith is in formation.

How this power and influence is exercised is different in a church school than in a public school setting. As the U.S. Supreme Court continues to sharpen the divide between church and state, overt messages of faith in public school settings must be increasingly nuanced. But the influence that a beloved teacher has on a student is the same in any setting. One example is the story of Sarai Jones discovering a mentor whose care and attention redirected her life (page 8).

Those who teach know that this kind of mentoring can happen every day. If asked, each teacher could probably be coaxed into telling similar stories. Or, if too humble to talk about the students whose lives they have changed, they could be coaxed into bringing out the cache of cards, letters, gifts and kudos they have quietly stashed away over the years.

The opportunity to minister is present in any teacher-student relationship, whether it be in a Sunday school setting, a church school or in a public classroom. It is the role itself—not the kind of school in which the student is taught—on which we focus this year. So on this Church Education Sunday congregations are invited to follow the suggestions offered by Mennonite Education Agency:

- Pray regularly for all teachers and schools.
- Spend time praying and talking with those who are considering becoming teachers.
- Give teachers the opportunity to share their story and journey of faith and their concerns and worries.
- Help teachers know they are warmly appreciated and valued.
- Discuss ways your church can give teachers practical support.
- Be sensitive to teachers' spiritual needs and give them space and time to become spiritually refreshed.
- Ask a teacher to help you explore your own vocation and the ways in which you can express your faith through the many roles you have in your daily life.

Now is the time for our church to bless their ministry. Doing so will help teachers know that their calling is not only supported by the church but is also a vocation as sacred as the calling to pastor, evangelize or prophesy.—*ejt*

The Mennonite

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February 3, 2004

AMBS
LIBRARY

Can anything good come out of Philadelphia?

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Women in ministry

Donna Mast is co-pastor of Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Just to be asked, "What's it like to be a woman in ministry?" sets women apart. I imagine most women pastors have fielded this question more than once. I imagine also that men may be asked, "What's it like to be in ministry?" but not, "What's it like to be a man in ministry?"

Occasionally I have been asked to address this question on this page, so I will attempt an answer, recognizing that it will only be a partial answer. To answer it more fully requires having a roomful of women pastors discussing the question together. I can only respond from my own experience.

My sense of call is profound. To get my attention, God had to take drastic measures. I had no role models for women in ministry. Neither was it natural for people in my congregation to notice my gifts and ask if I had ever thought about the ministry. The Holy Spirit had to speak loudly and clearly in tones I could not ignore.

In many ways, being a woman in ministry is no different from being a man in ministry.

Saying yes to God's call meant I had to overcome my fear of offending or disappointing people I love dearly. I was afraid they would not live easily with the idea of me—a woman—entering the ministry. To my delight, most of these people wholeheartedly accept and support me in this role.

Saying yes to God's call also meant I had to overcome my own fears of being in the ministry. I was not a women's libber bent on opening up all doors that had been closed to women. I was happy where I was. To take on leadership for a congregation and particularly to assume to speak for God in the preaching role seemed too awesome a responsibility for me. This sense of the role being too big for the person is certainly not limited to women. I have heard plenty of men speak of being overwhelmed in similar ways.

Being a woman in ministry often means I am the only female in a group. Sometimes this is uncomfortable, but more often I am pleasantly surprised to learn that my voice and perspectives are valued.

Occasionally well-meaning people have pointed to Scripture to tell me how wrong I am to be in this role. The pain that comes at these times can be destructive. I am learning, slowly, to use that pain in constructive ways. In prayer, I have been reassured in the knowledge that I am exactly where God wants me at this time. My sense of call has been renewed at these times, and prayers for the person have been offered.

These painful times have been more than balanced out by people who tell me how thankful they are to have me for a pastor. I rejoice whenever the Lord is able to work through me to bring comfort or assistance to another. Sometimes I have been told it is easier to discuss certain matters with me because I am a woman. At other times, people have told me how thankful they are that their daughters can see me in the pastoring role.

In many ways, being a woman in ministry is no different from being a man in ministry. It is knowing that I alone can never be enough to fulfill all this role calls for. I can never be wise enough. I can never love enough. I can never be patient enough. It means asking God for more wisdom, more love, more patience. It means relying on God for strength, inspiration and peace. It means being filled with joy at the opportunity to participate with God in God's work.

I hope someday the question will no longer be asked because it will be just as common to see a woman as a man in this role. I hope it becomes more commonplace to hear, from both men and women, "What is it like to be in ministry? I need to know because I think God is calling me." TM

TheMennonite

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Let others plan funeral

While Everett J. Thomas' editorial had a good conclusion in "Death in the New Year" (Jan. 6), I have differing thoughts about the matter of planning for one's own funeral.

Jesus frequently talked about his impending death. The gospel is probably not really understood unless it is put into the context of his death. The concept of life that he talked about surely is larger than "medical strategies to keep us alive." It surely is more wholesome to talk about and come to terms with our death than it is to be in denial. Jesus frequently talked about the death he was facing, but we don't have any record of any funeral plans he made for himself.

I scrapped the funeral plans I once made for myself. Thirty years ago my attending doctor told the family that he expected my death within a month or two. I thought it would be a good idea to prepare for my funeral with song selections, pallbearer selections and even the reader of a sermon I had written. Several years later I concluded that was not a good idea. In the meantime, I have helped others plan funerals for loved ones and participated in their grief. In one case the dying one helped in the planning of the funeral several weeks before her death. She noted several songs she liked and a favorite Scripture. That certainly made funeral planning easier, but I don't know that it made it better. Funerals are for the benefit of the living. When the departing ones make the funeral plans, it is like they are still in control. Dying is about giving up control.

Good grief is exhausting but beneficial. When I attend a funeral I do it to help others grieve and have others help me grieve. When the ones who are grieving have to decide how best to honor the one deceased, it is good grief work they are doing. Sometimes tempers flare and feelings are hurt in the planning. Sometimes things are remembered that are sad or beautiful or humorous during the planning; that is a part of the process that helps the living cope with the loss they are feeling. The living remember what kind of faith or lack of faith the deceased exhibited.

I have chosen to have my family do the hard work when my funeral time arrives. I plan to rest and relax.—*John Otto, Newton, Kan.*

Jesus' humanity

I appreciated the Dec. 16, 2003, issue's theme on Christmas. I was reminded of a Christmas season some years ago when I felt completely dependent. In that dependency I could identify for the first time with baby Jesus who was at one time powerless and depending on others. He truly was the "son of man" as he humbly called himself.

I agree that I've often rushed ahead because I knew the Christmas story—perhaps too well. I got ahead of myself and tacked on the later events of Jesus' life like decorations on a tree. I missed Jesus' humanity regarding his dependent beginning and was choking on, or not assimilating, the later implications of his life.

I also appreciated "Why Christmas?" by Tripp York and "A Forgotten Side of Christmas" by James Klassen. As I take the opportunity to relinquish dubious Christmas customs, I have time and energy to notice those who are in pain and think of ways to fellowship with them.—*Merrill M. Derstine, Harleysville, Pa.*

Need more articles on peace

I am writing as an "other" respondent in your online poll that asks for a vote regarding content in *The Mennonite* (www.TheMennonite.org).

In "Why Mennonite?" (Jan. 6), Ted Grimsrud says, "Mennonite faith explicitly affirms pacifism as central to Christianity." This is true, and I feel *The Mennonite* should feature an article in every issue that affirms pacifism as central to Christianity. It is important for us to understand our peace position and pacifism and learn how to apply it on a daily basis.

You could include rotating articles that feature what one of our congregations is doing to further a peace outreach in the community. You could have topical discussions on how individual Mennonites address hostile and nonhostile questions regarding our peace stance with specific examples rather than generic examples. And something along the lines of winning souls to Jesus is very important. Nurturing and guiding souls to follow in the footsteps of Jesus is of paramount importance. Our pacifism is central to following in the steps of Jesus.—*Mark Amstutz, Eastham, Mass.*

IN THIS ISSUE

February is Black History Month. We pulled together three articles that address issues about African-American history from Mennonite experiences in Philadelphia. Leonard Dow (page 8), an African-American leader for 25 years, wonders whether he will follow the leaders he knew as a youth and go to another denomination or serve in the Mennonite church somewhere outside Philadelphia. Julie Prey-Harbaugh (page 12) describes in her Philadelphia experience the two mistakes white people make: (1) remaining oblivious to how white privilege is perpetuated or (2) either trying to help people of color in misdirected ways or withdrawing from them. Freeman Miller (page 14), the Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference bishop in Philadelphia, says Black History Month is needed as a "short-term corrective to our distorted histories."—*Editor*

MCC should help Chicago Mennonites
I was glad to read that Mennonite Central Committee opened an office in Chicago (News Digest, Dec. 16, 2003). It was long overdue. But I was saddened to hear that they have hired only one person for the job. The vision is lacking. MCC needs to open an office with at least 10 workers with mission programs already running.

It is a mistake to locate the office at Chicago Mennonite Learning Center. I fear the MCC office may go in the same direction as CMLC: split from the rest of the area Mennonites and having little lasting effect on our evangelism. CMLC gives an education through the eighth grade but leaves the children without a church home or further Anabaptist Christian direction.

Chicago Mennonites are split among themselves and have been for some time. MCC needs to come in with a strong vision and with leadership that helps the community of Mennonites work together with a lasting, impressionable impact. Bringing the hurt and undeserved into the church needs to be done successfully by Chicago's Mennonites.—*Jason Arndt, East Chicago, Ind.*

Oyer taught two generations
In his article "Mary Oyer and 606" (Nov. 18, 2003), Duane Stoltzfus notes that Oyer taught "a generation" of students at Goshen (Ind.) College. In my understanding, 40-plus years constitutes two generations. My family is proof of that. All five of us—parents, myself, two siblings—took a class called "Fine Arts" in the 1950s and "The Arts" in the 1980s from Mary Oyer. All of us would say without hesitation that it was one of the highlights of our time at Goshen.—*Melanie Zuercher, Hesston, Kan.*

Show Christ's love to unemployed
I was grateful to see the article by John Ratigan dealing with the unemployed ("Unemployed," Jan. 6). Due to cultural and religious emphases on working, many unemployed people are looked down upon as lazy and as drains to society. But unemployment can be the result of several different situations, not least of which are illness and disability. Whatever the cause, Christians should not look upon the unemployed as less valuable than the employed. We should strive to show Christ's love and compassion to all.—*Erica Collins, Todd, N.C.*

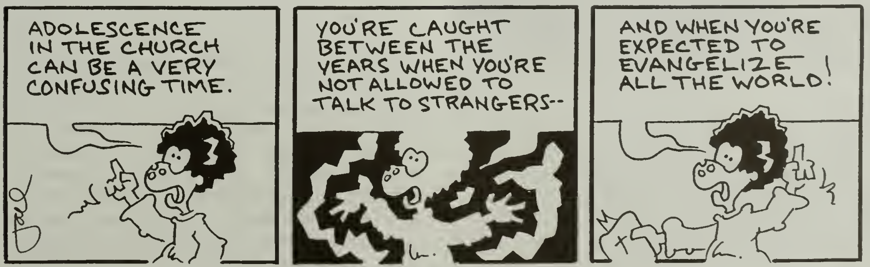
Father-son relationship honors God
Thanks for the piece on the father and son taking auto classes together ("A Father and Son You Auto Know," Jan. 6). It is a contrast to what I see on the Discovery Channel show "American Chopper." That television show takes us inside a father-and-son team that makes custom motorcycles. While I am sure the father and son love one another, their behavior, language and complete disrespect for each other is troubling. It was refreshing to read of a father and son working at something together in a way that brings honor to God and celebrates a healthy father-son relationship.—*Michael Danner, Metamora, Ill.*

Revelation discloses the future
I am uncomfortable with the interpretation that J. Denny Weaver gives to Revelation 5:9b-10 in the Dec. 16, 2003, issue ("Worthy Is the Lamb"). Prophecy frequently has a twofold interpretation: both an immediate and a future aspect. By pinning the meaning of such things as the seals to the first century, Weaver makes the same mistake others make when they say such meanings are fulfilled later—in the 21st century or two millennia later.

Revelation is primarily a call to worship God. The meaning of Revelation is in the title of Weaver's article: Worthy is the lamb. Regardless of what we say or how we interpret this book, Revelation discloses the future. Earth events are controlled by God, not by circumstances or by Satan himself. God judges man for his sin. God is not some distant God who simply pronounces judgment.—*Harvey Stoltzfus, Morgantown, Pa.*

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. —*Editors*

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


ADOLESCENCE IN THE CHURCH CAN BE A VERY CONFUSING TIME.
YOU'RE CAUGHT BETWEEN THE YEARS WHEN YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO TALK TO STRANGERS--
AND WHEN YOU'RE EXPECTED TO EVANGELIZE ALL THE WORLD!

this date in Mennonite history

Feb. 3, 1927— The Chinese Mennonite Church—now known as the GKMI Mennonite synod—is established in Indonesia.

Hesston presidential search extended

HESSTON, Kan.—The hunt goes on for a new president for Hesston College. The search committee had hoped to announce a candidate early this year, but the term of interim president Peter Wiebe has been extended through June 30, 2005.

"Each member of the search committee is committed to discerning the best candidate for the Hesston presidency at this particular time, and I am grateful for that," says committee member Norm Yoder, who is also a member of the college's board of overseers. "We will continue to work at that process."

Wiebe was named interim president last year, succeeding Loren Swartzendruber, who will become the next president of Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. His extension has been approved by the Mennonite Education Agency (MEA) board upon recommendation from the Hesston board.

"We must systematically take into consideration the needs of the institution, its vision for the future and the unique role of Hesston College within Mennonite education and Mennonite Church USA," says MEA executive director Carlos Romero.

Mennonite Mission Network

Mission commission

Jon Linn receives prayers as he is commissioned to serve in Sweden with a Reaching and Discipling team. The Dec. 20, 2003, service at Maplewood Mennonite Church in Fort Wayne, Ind., saw teams commissioned for work in Macau, Mexico and Macon, Ga., in addition to Sweden. RAD is a short-term mission program for young adults. It is supported by Mennonite Mission Network, Fellowship of Evangelical Churches (formerly Evangelical Mennonite Church) and congregations.

MCC Great Lakes expands SWAP program

ELKHORN, W.Va.—Building on relationships established by Mennonite Disaster Service following flooding in 2001, Sharing With Appalachian People (SWAP) is expanding its home-repair program into southern West Virginia.

SWAP, a program of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Great Lakes, has had three locations in Kentucky. The program has been a popular summer service option. The Elkhorn location will be SWAP's first year-round operation.

Randy and Lisa Wiebe from MacGregor, Man., have arrived in Elkhorn to serve an MCC term as location coordinators. The program is also looking for summer staff to help coordinate meals and materials and supervise construction.

MDS came to the Elkhorn area in the wake of devastating floods nearly three years ago. After two years and 200 home repairs, MDS leaders were concerned about the needs that remained. "The lines between flood-related relief and other needs became blurred," says Jim Huebner, MCC Appalachia co-coordinator.

The Elkhorn area, like other regions, was hit hard by the collapse of the coal industry several decades ago. McDowell County had lost three-quarters of its people by 1985; those that left were generally the young and the wealthy. Due to the lack of health care and environmental damage from the mines, life expectancy among boys born in the county today is 64.5 years. Many people are unable to maintain and repair their homes.—*MCC News Service*

MEDA helps start credit firm in Jamaica

WINNIPEG—With the assistance of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), the Bank of Nova Scotia has started a microfinance organization to serve small borrowers in Jamaica.

Called Micro Enterprise Financing Ltd. (MEFL), the new venture comes at a time when many large banks have been ignoring the small-business sector in developing countries. Bank of Nova Scotia is a subsidiary of Scotiabank. MEDA has nearly 20 years of microfinance experience in Jamaica.

MEDA's role in MEFL has included assisting with the start-up process, designing a market study, setting up operations systems, training staff and management, developing policies, installing accounting and tracking systems, and providing technical support. MEDA continues to provide assessment of ongoing activities and identification of the organization's strengths and weaknesses.

MEFL is meeting projections, says Ruth Dueck-Mbebe, a MEDA staff member involved in the project. MEFL has issued 461 loans worth $2.2 million to 270 clients.—*MEDA News Service*

MCC photo by Dave Klassen

Blanketed with assistance

Evaline Odong receives one of the 13,658 blankets collected by Mennonite Central Committee and distributed to Ugandans displaced by that country's ongoing civil conflict. The distribution, organized by the Anglican Diocese of Kitgum, focused on people who had not received blankets from any other international organization.

Grant to continue trauma program

HARRISONBURG, Va.—The Conflict Transformation Program at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, has received a $1 million grant from Church World Service to continue a university-based training program for religious leaders and caregivers in areas affected by trauma.

CWS gave EMU an initial grant of nearly $1 million to establish STAR (Seminars on Trauma Awareness and Recovery) in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The new grant will allow the seminars to continue on the EMU campus through 2005. This will include additional introductory seminars, including at least one in Spanish and other seminars designed for Muslim or Jewish participants.

STAR has offered 20 seminars—19 on campus and one in South America—involving nearly 400 people. Participants have come from 27 states and 32 countries.

Bethel appoints new vice president

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Former banker and Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) worker Lowell J. Peachey began Jan. 15 as vice president of business affairs at Bethel College in North Newton.

Peachey

"Lowell will bring to this position experience and knowledge of financial and operational management as well as a strong commitment to Bethel's Anabaptist heritage," says president E. LaVerne Epp. "Bethel will benefit from Lowell's entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to the broader church."

Peachey previously gave leadership to a private consulting company that markets leadership development and training. Prior to that he was a bank president in Roxbury, Kan., from 1993 to 2002. He has also held banking and financial services positions in Iowa and was MEDA's Haiti country manager from 1990 to 1993.

Peachey is on the boards of MEDA and Prairie View, a Mennonite-affiliated mental-health facility based in Newton. He is also a trustee for Western District Conference.

Peachey holds degrees from Hesston (Kan.) College, Iowa Wesleyan College in Mount Pleasant and the Graduate School of Banking at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Bluffton academic dean to step down

BLUFFTON, Ohio—John Kampen, Bluffton College vice president and dean of academic affairs since 1997, has announced his intention to leave by the end of August. He wants to devote more time to research and teaching.

Kampen

Kampen helped the college introduce a master's program in organizational management, an honors program for exceptional students, three new academic majors and four minors. He also initiated major revisions of the faculty governance structure and led a major analysis of Bluffton's academic programs.

"John has given unstintingly of himself to Bluffton College, and I have valued his wisdom and experience immensely," says president Lee Snyder. "Much has been accomplished in the academic program under his leadership. His achievements in scholarship have been a model to faculty."

Kampen is recongized as an authority on the Dead Sea Scrolls. He holds degrees from the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., and Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Before coming to Bluffton, he was academic dean and professor of New Testament at Payne Theological Seminary in Wilberforce, Ohio. He earlier served at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont.

Can anything good
Ph

Out of a history of struggle comes hope.

by Leonard M. Dow

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."—John 1:43-46

Our Savior Jesus Christ faced the question of the value of a particular place. Though the question is not new to many of us, it doesn't diminish the pain it can inflict. I felt this pain along with my Mennonite Central Committee colleagues as we sat across the desk from a prominent Mennonite lawyer. We were seeking advice on a business and service venture in Philadelphia. I represented the urban and Philadelphia interest. My colleagues and I enthusiastically presented a vision for a facility to house a mega thrift store, along with the possibility of a café, a Christian bookstore, an art studio or a church. Also we felt that Philadelphia had some attractive attributes; it would be an excellent complement to the other existing East Coast thrift stores, we had a pool of potential workers within the Anabaptist faith network, a large urban population who are traditionally strong thrift shoppers, and local Anabaptist leadership could be of logistical assistance.

The Mennonite lawyer's response was chilling. "Let me be frank," he

come out of
iladelphia?

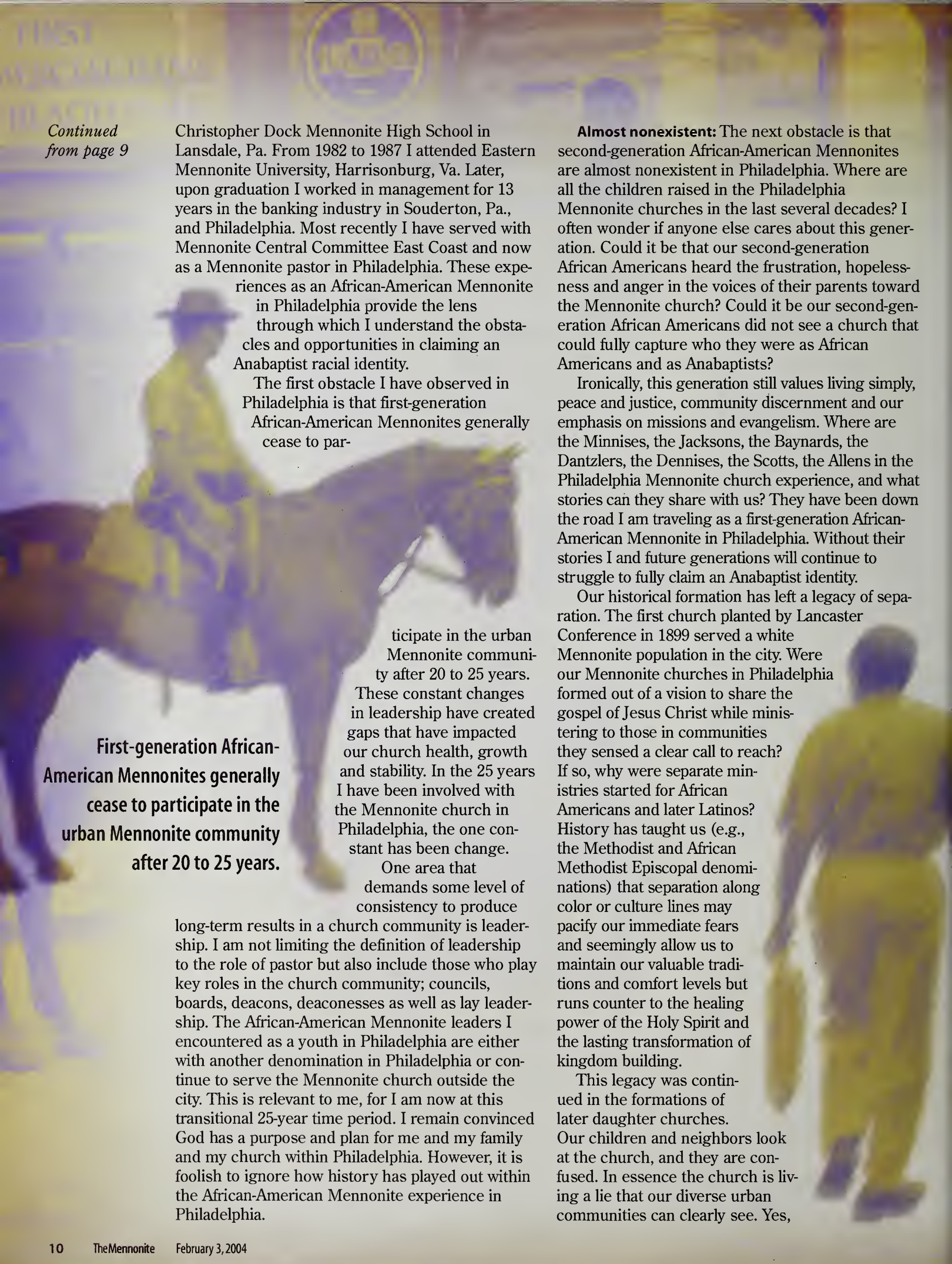
said, "there isn't anything good in Philadelphia." He went on to say that the people are lazy, the schools are bad, they produce unlawful young people, the mayor is a crook and the streets are all dirty. Furthermore, he told us he advises others to stay away from Philadelphia because the city is not a place anyone chooses to live in. Outside its art museum, theaters, historical sites, sports stadiums and the airport, Philadelphia is no longer relevant to the rest of the region, he said. He told us that when he came as a youth for Mennonite voluntary service into North Philadelphia, the city had many good people. He said he was full of optimism as he worked with the Mennonite churches there. However, since the late 1960s and early 1970s he had seen a steady decline in the city. He closed with these sobering words: "You have been given jobs and life skills. Where is all that now? What do you [Philadelphia Mennonites] have to show for all that?" The central question becomes, Can anything good come out of the city of Philadelphia?

Niceties: Many of the obstacles facing African Americans in fully embracing an Anabaptist identity are connected to this account. We are affirmed in various public gatherings. Yet beneath the niceties expressed at these integrated settings are feelings that are rarely expressed. Thus, creating a continued environment of fear, mistrust, pain, confusion, disappointment, blame and anger. As I listened to my white Mennonite brother from the suburbs, I was forced to contend with the validity of his disturbing question. Have we as a people produced anything of value in Philadelphia or to the larger Mennonite church experience? Does anyone really care if we live or die in this place? Had I wasted the last 25 years of my life in this denomination?

My faith is in Jesus Christ, not a denomination, yet in choosing to be part of this denomination I must continue to have a clear sense that God is alive and still moving in our midst. My first contact with the Mennonite church was through education. From 1978 to 1982 I attended

Continued on page 10

The Mennonite lawyer's response was chilling. "Let me be frank," he said, "there isn't anything good in Philadelphia."



Continued from page 9

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School in Lansdale, Pa. From 1982 to 1987 I attended Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. Later, upon graduation I worked in management for 13 years in the banking industry in Souderton, Pa., and Philadelphia. Most recently I have served with Mennonite Central Committee East Coast and now as a Mennonite pastor in Philadelphia. These experiences as an African-American Mennonite in Philadelphia provide the lens through which I understand the obstacles and opportunities in claiming an Anabaptist racial identity.

The first obstacle I have observed in Philadelphia is that first-generation African-American Mennonites generally cease to participate in the urban Mennonite community after 20 to 25 years. These constant changes in leadership have created gaps that have impacted our church health, growth and stability. In the 25 years I have been involved with the Mennonite church in Philadelphia, the one constant has been change. One area that demands some level of consistency to produce long-term results in a church community is leadership. I am not limiting the definition of leadership to the role of pastor but also include those who play key roles in the church community; councils, boards, deacons, deaconesses as well as lay leadership. The African-American Mennonite leaders I encountered as a youth in Philadelphia are either with another denomination in Philadelphia or continue to serve the Mennonite church outside the city. This is relevant to me, for I am now at this transitional 25-year time period. I remain convinced God has a purpose and plan for me and my family and my church within Philadelphia. However, it is foolish to ignore how history has played out within the African-American Mennonite experience in Philadelphia.

First-generation African-American Mennonites generally cease to participate in the urban Mennonite community after 20 to 25 years.

Almost nonexistent: The next obstacle is that second-generation African-American Mennonites are almost nonexistent in Philadelphia. Where are all the children raised in the Philadelphia Mennonite churches in the last several decades? I often wonder if anyone else cares about this generation. Could it be that our second-generation African Americans heard the frustration, hopelessness and anger in the voices of their parents toward the Mennonite church? Could it be our second-generation African Americans did not see a church that could fully capture who they were as African Americans and as Anabaptists?

Ironically, this generation still values living simply, peace and justice, community discernment and our emphasis on missions and evangelism. Where are the Minnises, the Jacksons, the Baynards, the Dantzlers, the Dennises, the Scotts, the Allens in the Philadelphia Mennonite church experience, and what stories can they share with us? They have been down the road I am traveling as a first-generation African-American Mennonite in Philadelphia. Without their stories I and future generations will continue to struggle to fully claim an Anabaptist identity.

Our historical formation has left a legacy of separation. The first church planted by Lancaster Conference in 1899 served a white Mennonite population in the city. Were our Mennonite churches in Philadelphia formed out of a vision to share the gospel of Jesus Christ while ministering to those in communities they sensed a clear call to reach? If so, why were separate ministries started for African Americans and later Latinos? History has taught us (e.g., the Methodist and African Methodist Episcopal denominations) that separation along color or culture lines may pacify our immediate fears and seemingly allow us to maintain our valuable traditions and comfort levels but runs counter to the healing power of the Holy Spirit and the lasting transformation of kingdom building.

This legacy was continued in the formations of later daughter churches. Our children and neighbors look at the church, and they are confused. In essence the church is living a lie that our diverse urban communities can clearly see. Yes, there must be a space in the church for ethnic, cultural or language-specific churches. But what should be the exception has become the rule in an attempt to maintain church stability as well as stimulate so-called church growth. With the power of the Holy Spirit, may we take seriously the historical and biblical Anabaptist understanding of worship, missions, community discernment, mutual accountability and peace. This restored vision should lead us in new ways of implementing and measuring missions, service, evangelism and church planting as it relates to empowering local leadership.

As I consider the probing question of my dear Mennonite brother—"Can anything good come out of Philadelphia?"—I remain optimistic, because I am encouraged by these opportunities that God has faithfully presented us:

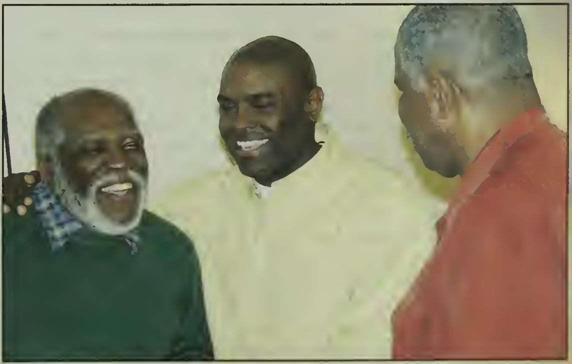
- This conference on Philadelphia stories has begun the needed process of healing. However, healing must continue to transpire among us here in Philadelphia as well as with our brothers and sisters outside the city.
- Kingdom Builders is a network of 22 diverse Anabaptist churches searching together, praying together, learning and discerning God's will for the city.
- Philadelphia Anabaptist Picnic is a time when more than 400 Mennonites (of the estimated 1,000) in Philadelphia come together each summer for fellowship, food and fun.
- Philadelphia Mennonite High School educates close to 90 young people each year. These young people, predominately of African-American descent, will one day enter our colleges and mission and service programs, with some returning to Philadelphia as leaders in our churches.

Our history, like that of many other people groups, is one marked by struggle. But something good has come and will continue to come from Philadelphia, not because of who we are but because of who Jesus is and what he has done in us and through us. May this promise from God's Word guide us as we pray:

"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land [our denomination, our city, our churches, our hearts]. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place" (2 Chronicles 7:14-15).

Separation along color or culture lines may pacify our immediate fears and seemingly allow us to maintain our valuable traditions and comfort levels but runs counter to the healing power of the Holy Spirit and the lasting transformation of kingdom building.

Leonard M. Dow is pastor of Oxford Circle Mennonite Church in Philadelphia. This article is adapted from a talk, "Claming an Anabaptist Racial Identity: Obstacles and Opportunities," he gave April 5, 2003, in Philadelphia at the conference "Philadelphia Stories: Kingdom Building in the City," which was sponsored by Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee and Archives and the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in the city. Copies of his full presentation as well as other presentations from the conference are available from Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee and Archives.



Laurie L. Oswald

Process of healing: Leonard Dow (center) with Lee Roy Berry (left), Goshen, Ind., a member of the planning committee for the Philadelphia Stories conference, and Otis Banks, pastor of Diamond Street Mennonite Church in Philadelphia.

Holding on &

Beginning thoughts on what it means to be white and Mennonite in Philadelphia

by Julie Prey-Harbaugh

Privilege has a funny way of making us oblivious to it. We easily lose track of its effects on our lives and the lives of those around us on the underside of our upper hand. This is why it takes a special assignment for even an educated, culturally sensitive, interpersonally attentive and all-around caring white woman like me to reflect on her racial identity and what it means within her denomination in my urban setting.

I wrestle with two core challenges: holding on and letting go. I'm not sure which comes first, if one leads to the other or if they are inextricably linked. However, they may help white people move forward from two fatal flaws in race relations: (1) being so oblivious that we do not even know we are perpetuating racism or (2) being so guilt-ridden that we either try to help people of color in misdirected ways or withdraw from them. Engaging these challenges can help us move toward the kinds of relationships in which we will be vulnerable to one another and form true community.

Our task as white Mennonites is to re-examine our cultural history and reclaim it: the good and the bad.

Holding on: I mean holding on to our culture. In her book *Sexuality in the Black Church: a Womanist Perspective*, Kelly Brown Douglas writes: "Whiteness—whether determined by ethnicity or biology—emerged in America, even as it had in Europe, as a mark of human superiority. It was viewed as the normative and certainly more valued human characteristic. As such, it was a central factor for holding together a once motley throng of European people, even as it became a measure for denigrating other human beings. This contemptuous white group identity in America was the harbinger of white culture."

White culture promotes the sanctity of whiteness by devaluing what is not white. It is accompanied by systems that also privilege whiteness. Whiteness is a ticket to social, political and economic status and power in U.S. society.

Is there any hope for white people to break free of this cultural machine? Douglas says there is. Realizing that white culture has "choked many a human being to death," she writes, "James Baldwin offers this redemptive possibility for white Americans: 'Go back to where you started, or as far as you can, examine all of it, travel your road again and tell the truth about it. Sing or shout or testify or keep it to yourself: but know when you came.' "

Our task as white Mennonites is to re-examine our cultural history and reclaim it: the good and the bad. For holding on, however, we need to know our culture in its specifics, focusing on our positive history and social heritage, and identifying with it over and above generic whiteness.

One of the great blessings of being white and Mennonite is that we actually do have something to reach back for. Even if our people have been in the United States for centuries, we are not far distanced from our cultural distinctives, if we are even distanced from them at all.

Shoofly pie, quilts, fasnachts, plain dress, motorless vehicles, our own dialect—the trappings of Pennsylvania German culture that my Protestant grandparents and their Anabaptist contemporaries embodied—are things we can claim as our own. Such little things may help us claim our own identity, just as so many of our brothers and sisters of color do here in Philadelphia.

One problem is that Pennsylvania German culture has been equated with being Mennonite. As a solution to that problem we often have left too much behind. In an effort to be culturally relevant in a more diverse context, we soaked up the white culture around us. When that became uncomfortable, we tried on the cultural marks of other ethnic groups in our search for identity. Instead of being one cultural group among many, we became white, defined by our affluent preferences and our difference from people of color, not by our uniquely creative and enriching social contributions.

I'm not quite ready to start making my own clothes or wearing a covering, but I do want to know my own culture—the positives of its traditions—and make them mine. I want to hold on. Also I want to know my Anabaptist roots, reach back to the 1500s, when my white forebears in the faith were so culturally distinct, so brazen and courageous in the face of their powerful, persecuting white world. I want to know where I came from.

&letting go

Skjold Photographs

Letting go: Looking back and telling the truth about the past will also reveal things I do not want to know. There is much to be ashamed of:

- The regular banter in my rural white hometown about the negative impact of "niggers" and "spicks" in neighboring cities and the fear that they would soon invade "our" space as well.
- My dumbfounded silence in the face of such discussions.
- My misguided, though youthfully optimistic and idealistic, ideas about the problems faced by minority families in the inner city and how they could be solved by white people like me.
- Every time I looked a darker-skinned neighbor in the face and did not speak or I bumped someone on the trolley and did not excuse myself or I was especially nervous because the two guys walking toward me were black.
- The way I watched our church's Damascus Road process fall to pieces as we claimed we were too enlightened a group of white people to be racist.
- Or the time I voted down a candidate for copastor, who was a person of color, feeling 99 percent at peace with my choice but with a lingering fear that somehow I did not properly understand the race issues involved.

My life is cluttered with such things. Part of being white and caring about the fact that whites tend to dominate means my interactions with people of color or on the topic of race are riddled with doubts. I tend to assume I am wrong because I am white, and racism lives on in me, making me blind to so much I want to see.

This can be paralyzing. The awareness that once inspired me to want to be part of the solution to racism can become crippling. Too much information. Too much shame. Enough to keep me from coming confidently to the table with my brothers and sisters of color.

In his book *The Forgiving Self*, Robert Karen says about regret: "Obsessive regret … has a paradoxical quality, in that it is often a way of continuing the very thing that is regretted. Through regret we deny ourselves the space to be. There is no right to explore, to struggle, to make mistakes, to not know. There is no forgiving voice that says, You were being you, and that was all you could be at the time. There is only bitterness and grudge. Obsessive regret is how we submit and get defeated. Often, it is little more than revenge against [ourselves]."

Obsessively regretful white people tend to disappear, reinforcing what we do not want to happen. Afraid of being exposed as racist, power-hungry, selfish, even brutal, we withdraw, giving white culture the power to take its course.

We need to let go, forgive ourselves every day for every clumsy, awkward attempt we make to relate well to our brothers and sisters of color. We need to remember and accept our collective past, littered as it is with horrendous offenses against people of color. We also need to remember and accept our individual pasts, ugly as they are. We need, however, also to open our hearts to ourselves if we expect to open them to anyone else. We must forgive ourselves and let go.

It will be impossible to embrace a culture for ourselves if we are too ashamed of ourselves to do it. At the same time we will remain ashamed of ourselves as white people if the only culture we identify with is white culture, that ugly beast whose only defining characteristic is its ability to be dominant. To hold on to our culture, we must let go of our shame. To let go of our shame, we must hold on to our culture.

In doing so, we must find a place to stand: a place where our identity as white people is no longer a slippery thing, a place where we give ourselves the space to be. In doing so we may create a space for us all, people of color and white folks alike, to struggle together in mutual vulnerability toward wholeness and community. TM

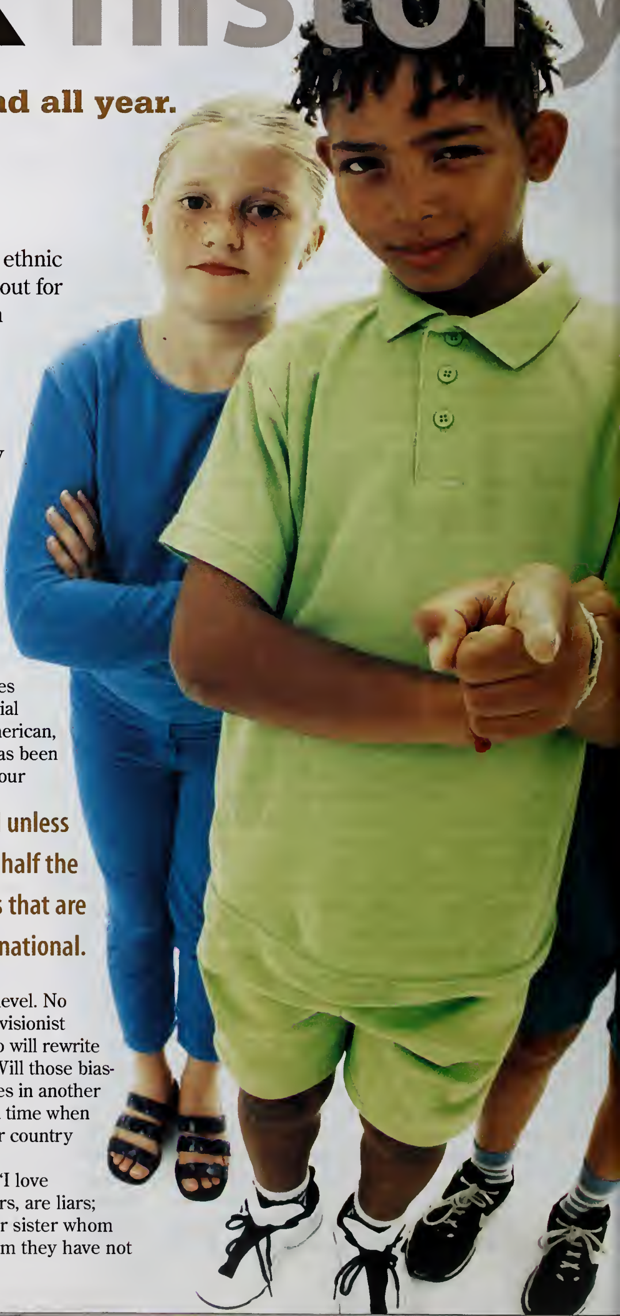
We will remain ashamed of ourselves as white people if the only culture we identify with is white culture, that ugly beast whose only defining characteristic is its ability to be dominant.

Julie Prey-Harbaugh is a member of West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship and a student at Princeton Theological Seminary. This article is adapted from a talk she gave April 5, 2003, at the conference Philadelphia Stories: Kingdom Building in the City.

Black history

We all do—this month and all year.

by Freeman Miller



In the best of all worlds, no ethnic group needs to be singled out for special consideration when writing our history books. But history has not always been so fairminded or even-handed in recording the great achievements of peoples. As any history major knows, even the most objective historian will inevitably filter events through the perspectives shaped by the culture of the historian.

Since so much of American history has been recorded (not to say controlled) by European Americans, and therefore colored by cultural biases and nuances, much noteworthy material from the African-American, Native-American, Asian-American and Latino cultures has been overlooked or suppressed in many of our school textbooks, even at the college level. No wonder there is a strong push for a revisionist rewriting of our history texts. But who will rewrite them and from what cultural biases? Will those biases then distort those rewritten histories in another direction? If so, will there ever come a time when all the history textbooks written in our country will be balanced and inclusive?

We cannot love those we don't understand unless we get to know them, and more than half the world's population now resides in cities that are multiethnic and international.

The Bible states, "Those who say, 'I love God,' and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not

Who needs it?

DigitalVision

seen" (1 John 4:20). We cannot love those we don't understand unless we get to know them, and more than half the world's population now resides in cities that are multiethnic and international.

As Christ's incarnation demonstrates, true love enters into the culture of the beloved to the point of being ready to lay down one's life for the other. This is a serious challenge, a high and holy calling. It behooves us as a community of scholars and learners to be diligent in our commitments to fully understand each other.

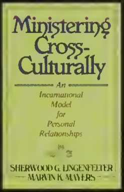
For me as a European American living in North Philadelphia, this has been a lifelong journey of discovery.

Black History Month is needed as a short-term corrective to our distorted histories.

Black History Month is needed as a short-term corrective to our distorted histories. I hope that eventually black history is woven into a seamless tapestry that includes all cultures and ethnicities. There are many reasons African Americans deserve special recognition, not only in February but every day of the year, but I will not pursue those reasons further at this point.

Freeman Miller is the bishop for Lancaster Conference congregations in Philadelphia.

Suggestions for Black History Month


Ministering Cross-Culturally
An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships
SHERWOOD G. LINGENFELTER
MARVIN K. MAYERS

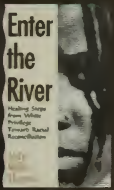
For a general introduction for Christians to see how open we really are to entering another culture, an unsurpassed primer is **Ministering Cross-Culturally** by Lingenfelter and Mayers. It includes an easy quiz to score yourself on openness to other cultures from an evangelical Christian perspective. It's inexpensive and easy to read.

BEFORE THE MAYFLOWER
A History of Black America
LERONE BENNETT, JR.

For those wanting the full dose of African-American history, from the ancient empires in Africa through slavery days to the present, the classic by Lerone Bennett, **Before the Mayflower**, remains unsurpassed.

BLACK VOICES

Abraham Chapman's **Black Voices** is a well-rounded anthology of African-American literature that helps us enter the pathos of the black experience.



For those ready to seriously explore the concept of white privilege, **Enter the River: A Journey Toward Solidarity** by Iris de León-Hartshorn, Tobin Miller Shearer and Regina Shands Stoltzfus (Herald Press) is a good introduction from an Anabaptist perspective (and ties in well with the Damascus Road Antiracism training program. The book and training are helpful in understanding institutional racism.

The Color of Water
JAMES McBRIDE

The Coming Race Wars? A Cry for Reconciliation by Pannell, Perkins, and Kesler is a wake-up call for all Christians. My neighbors and sons-in-law also teach me much that is valuable in current black history, as do such recent books as **The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother** by James McBride. Nothing helps one enter another culture as much as hearing the stories and heart cries of people in that culture; in other words, sharing personal histories. As Vincent Harding has long claimed, unless we share histories we will not be likely to share much else. (Harding's **Martin Luther King: the Inconvenient Hero** and **There is a River** are also unflinching scholarly probes into the agony and ecstasy of African Americans.)

MARTIN LUTHER KING
The Inconvenient Hero
Vincent Harding

All these titles are available from Amazon.com and help us avoid such naive comments as, "What do they want?"—*Freeman Miller*

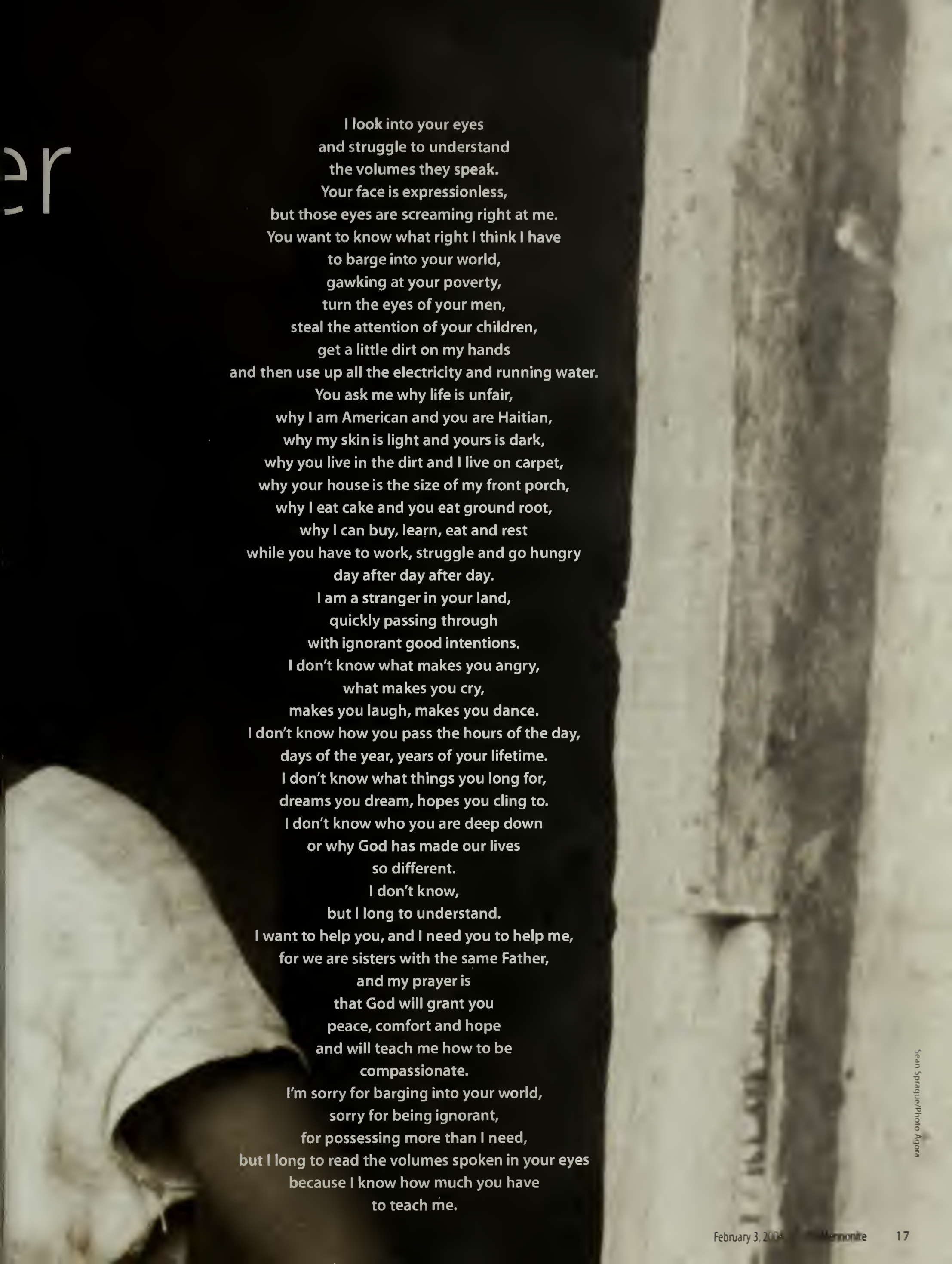
My Haitian sist

by Mary Clemmer

In January 2003 I traveled to Haiti with a group of six seniors from my youth group and four other adults from our church. While there we worked with the Water for Life mission in Passe-bois-d'ormes, met many Christians, played with the kids, were inspired as we worshiped with the Haitians and learned a lot about a different culture.

One thing especially affected me on the trip. When we traveled in the truck to different places, we drove past huts and houses and people walking along the road. The kids waved at us excitedly and jumped up and down, and the adults nodded or waved respectfully, but if we ever got an indifferent or cold response it was from Haitian girls around my age. When we drove past, I smiled or waved, but they just stared back at me. Those eyes haunted me, and when I got back I wrote this poem to express my feelings.

Mary Clemmer is a member of Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church and is a student at Messiah College, Grantham, Pa.

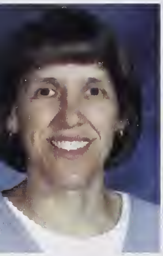


er

I look into your eyes
and struggle to understand
the volumes they speak.
Your face is expressionless,
but those eyes are screaming right at me.
You want to know what right I think I have
to barge into your world,
gawking at your poverty,
turn the eyes of your men,
steal the attention of your children,
get a little dirt on my hands
and then use up all the electricity and running water.
You ask me why life is unfair,
why I am American and you are Haitian,
why my skin is light and yours is dark,
why you live in the dirt and I live on carpet,
why your house is the size of my front porch,
why I eat cake and you eat ground root,
why I can buy, learn, eat and rest
while you have to work, struggle and go hungry
day after day after day.
I am a stranger in your land,
quickly passing through
with ignorant good intentions.
I don't know what makes you angry,
what makes you cry,
makes you laugh, makes you dance.
I don't know how you pass the hours of the day,
days of the year, years of your lifetime.
I don't know what things you long for,
dreams you dream, hopes you cling to.
I don't know who you are deep down
or why God has made our lives
so different.
I don't know,
but I long to understand.
I want to help you, and I need you to help me,
for we are sisters with the same Father,
and my prayer is
that God will grant you
peace, comfort and hope
and will teach me how to be
compassionate.
I'm sorry for barging into your world,
sorry for being ignorant,
for possessing more than I need,
but I long to read the volumes spoken in your eyes
because I know how much you have
to teach me.

Sean Sprague/Photo Agora

Reflections of a youth convention survivor



Laura Richards is a member of Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Church, where she is in her fifth year as a youth sponsor.

Atlanta 2003 was my third youth convention. I also attended St. Louis 1999 and the 2001 Canadian convention in Abbotsford, B.C. All three of these were wonderful, faith-building experiences for both sponsors and youth.

The worship services challenged the youth to follow Christ through the study of Scripture, thought-provoking sermons, skits and music.

The service projects were well-organized, providing opportunities for youth to learn about and serve in nearby communities.

The seminars covered a wide variety of topics, including prayer, Bible study, sexuality, environmental issues, working for peace and justice, service opportunities, shopping with integrity, living simply, Mennonite colleges and more.

Early morning meetings brought sponsors together to discuss concerns and deal with problems.

As with previous conventions, MYFers and sponsors attending the Atlanta convention were on the go from 7 a.m. until midnight or later. We were exhausted by the end of the week.

We also lost some hearing. Music played too loudly can cause irreparable damage to our hearing. If you have to shout to be heard by someone three feet away, as was the case at all three conventions I've attended, the music is too loud. The good news is that music-induced hearing loss is preventable. Just turn down the volume.

And when we do, we'll hear our youth singing praise songs but few hymns. "We need both the old and the new," according to Mary Oyer in *The Mennonite* (Nov. 18, 2003, issue). So true. Mennonite youth like to sing hymns and want to learn to sing in parts. They also enjoy praise songs and might enjoy singing worship songs from around the world, too, if given a chance.

When we honor our speakers during the final session, we need to be careful. Listing the names of the speakers during the final session set up an uncomfortable situation. Youth clapped loudly for some, less enthusiastically for others. Let's either clap appreciatively for every speaker or hold our applause until the end, then clap for all of them.

Music-induced hearing loss is preventable. Just turn down the volume.

Of the three conventions, my favorite was Abbotsford 2001. The youth met separately from the adults. It was a much smaller convention—about 300 youth. We ate, slept and worshiped together on the campus of a small Bible college. Before the convention, each youth group had the option of "twinning" with youth from another church. Our youth group met with youth from an Abbotsford church the night before the convention and continued to relate with those kids throughout the week. The weather was great. We enjoyed getting outside, playing frisbee. We spent our last day at a church camp in the mountains swimming, hiking and playing games. That evening, surrounded by the beauty of God's creation, we worshiped together under the stars.

That certainly wasn't possible at either St. Louis or Atlanta, where it was too hot outside. I know it's cheaper to schedule a convention in places that are too hot to attract tourists. But that also means we're inside a crowded convention center most of each day. Not fun.

On the other hand, there is something wonderful about being together with thousands of youth from all over the country. It can be overwhelming as well. There were so many youth busy with a variety of activities spread out all over the convention center. At Atlanta, except for A-Junction, there was no mechanism for helping youth connect with youth from other churches.

What are some ways we might organize youth conventions to better meet the needs of our youth? One option is to alternate between nationwide and state- or conference-wide youth conventions. Youth might join the adults for their national convention one year, then two years later hold a youth-only convention by state or by conference. Smaller gatherings might cost less than national conventions and reduce the amount of time youth groups spend fund-raising.

What matters is what's best for our youth. They need sleep and opportunities to meet youth from other churches. I also think they'd like to sing more hymns in their worship services, and we should make sure the volume is turned down. It's up to all of us to provide our youth with a variety of experiences that lead them to faith in Christ. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **From mission to missional**—Jim Lapp
- **Lessons from the Good Samaritan**—Ginnie Horst Burkholder
- **Becoming a neighbor**—Tim Schrag

Mennonite Central Committee photo by Matthew Lester

In Ethiopia, members of the Afar ethnic group load Mennonite Central Committee-donated wheat onto camels for transport home. MCC last year provided food aid to people in 32 countries.

32 countries received MCC food aid in '03

But emergency assistance is only the first step to security, agency official says.

In 2003, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) sent food or funds for food to 32 countries, providing sustenance for victims of war and natural disaster, those mired in ongoing poverty and others trapped by economic and political situations beyond their control. In all, $249,000 was provided to purchase food locally, and approximately 3,100 metric tons of staples such as wheat, maize or beans were shipped.

"We're still seeing a lot of internal conflict and hunger," says Willie Reimer, director of food, disaster and material resources for MCC.

In Iraq, MCC was able to fill gaps by providing funds to buy vegetables or high-protein food for more than two dozen hospitals, as well as providing canned meat for orphanages and schools.

A total of 322 metric tons of canned meat was shipped to locations from North Korea to Liberia to Haiti, with 76.6 metric tons of canned meat and dried food going to Bosnia.

In southern Africa, devastated by drought in 2002, a combination of food aid and funds to buy food locally helped people in Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe survive until the next harvest. That effort continues in Zimbabwe, where the outlook for the next year remains grim.

In northern Uganda, where MCC is providing a major food aid package in coming weeks, an estimated 1.2 million people have been displaced. Many more leave their homes each evening to avoid abduction by rebels. The food will be purchased locally, a tactic that saves time and money on shipping and also helps pump money into local economies.

When MCC decides to send food aid, the organization concentrates on both alleviating immediate hunger and on longer-term food security. "Emergency aid is the first step in food security," Reimer says. "People need the energy to be able to work and create their own assets."

In India, the focus is not only helping families immediately but also developing the community. In Jharkand in eastern India, for instance, a two-month project will provide rice and lentils purchased locally for 1,161 people who work building a road, embankment or water tank.

The food is desperately needed in this drought-devastated area, but the construction will provide benefits far beyond feeding families for this growing season. It is meant to eventually give farmers greater access to water for agriculture and also allow them to cultivate fish.

Reimer stresses that MCC strives not to overlook countries whose situations are dire but almost unnoticed. "We want to look at not only high-profile but also low-profile places in the world where there is tremendous need but it is not getting as much press," he says.

But even in the most crowded, most desperate camps of displaced people, Reimer has found those who will organize to work for change, hand out the aid that is received and pull together people to worship.

"Just as you have chronic situations of hunger and disaster, you also have long-standing ways that people cope: their strong faith, their willingness to look out and care for each other," he says. "These are all lessons for us."—*Marla Pierson Lester of MCC News Service*

We want to look at not only high-profile but also low-profile places in the world where there is tremendous need but it is not getting as much press.
—Willie Reimer

Conference minister lives culture of call

34 years after chosen by the lot, he now helps identify future church leaders.

Long before Darrell Baer heard about "cultivating a culture of call" in Mennonite Church USA, his own experience being called as a leader in Franklin Conference shows how strengths of the past may help build the future church.

If we're going to stay centered in our Anabaptist values, then we need to be very intentional about filling our pulpits with people who are shaped by those values.—Darrell Baer

Baer, Franklin's first full-time conference minister, became a pastor through the lot in 1978. Even though the conference hasn't used the practice for about 15 years, it served to send Baer on a fruitful faith pilgrimage. Today he and about 50 other people are commissioned by the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board Office of Ministerial Leadership to identify and nurture leaders for the future.

"I was 32 years old when I was chosen for the ministry through the lot," Baer says. "At that time, I had a delivery route in which I sold snacks to stores. And when I was asked to be in the lot, I told my wife, Sharon, that I didn't know how I could pastor a congregation when I had to be out in a truck all day.

"But the Lord provided all I needed within a week. I was chosen for the lot on Sunday, and on Tuesday I got a contract to begin a poultry business at home. It allowed me to quit the delivery job and focus more on ministry. On Wednesday, I was ordained and became the pastor at Cedar Street Mennonite Church in Chambersburg [Pa.]."

Baer entered the pastorate with no formal training beyond high school. But he said he grew into his role, through guidance from mentors and classes offered at Eastern Mennonite Seminary's extension site in Lancaster, Pa.

"From the very beginning, I knew I couldn't hide behind knowledge but that I had to be authentic and transparent," Baer says. "Even though I had grown up in the conference and my father had been a deacon in the church I was to pastor, I couldn't hide behind him or fake anything. It's taken a lifetime to build integrity.

"When my father, who was my spiritual strength and closest guide, as he prayed for me every day, died in 1994 from a sudden heart attack, it really shook my faith. But it also made me realize that I must carry on the legacy that he began here in the conference."

The building of a life and a legacy includes Baer's love for and involvement in a conference that's had a longtime focus on missions, both at home and abroad, and a focus on nurturing leaders that he received from and later helped develop for a new time.

He and Cleon Nyce, conference minister preceding Baer, several years ago developed a program of two years of monthly visits, readings and a yearly weekend training session. The conference in 2003 also held a preaching institute.

The church must continue to foster a culture where all who hear a call can explore it and develop it further, Baer says. And Mennonite Church USA will most effectively find these leaders when it allows both the historical and contemporary views to shape the process.

"I feel that we are on the right track in Mennonite Church USA with our urgency about developing new leaders," he says. "But our professional mindset has snuffed out some of the surprise and awe of God. I think we've placed too much emphasis on formal education. We've forgotten that God calls people from a variety of backgrounds."

But Baer also supports people seeking training in the Anabaptist framework and hopes that many avenues for training will be tailored to fit those many backgrounds, including seminary, extension-site classes, adult education and mentoring programs.

"If we're going to stay centered in our Anabaptist values, then we need to be very intentional about filling our pulpits with people who are shaped by those values, because they will be responsible for teaching those values to others," he says. "The choosing and commissioning of our pastors is not inconsequential to the growth of our wider church. … A pastor who does not know from where he or she came can shift their congregation away from the Anabaptist center for a generation or perhaps forever.

"The pulpit cannot be left to chance and to the marketplace. We must be passionate and conscientious about preparing those we sense God is calling."—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Darrell Baer, the first full-time conference minister for Franklin Conference, speaks with Shana Boshart at a meeting of the Constituency Leaders Council.

Mennonite Church USA photo by Laurie L. Oswald

Lancaster, Pa., congregation finds focus

Yearlong program designed to promote church planting and leadership.

Through a hands-on inner-city church planter training called Focus nestled in the heart of a Lancaster, Pa., congregation, seven men and five women are committing to a yearlong learning experience about what it takes to lead a church.

"Focus, part of a Mobilization of Church Planters vision for the whole church, grew out of my desire to see God raise up young people as church planters," says Josef Berthold, pastor of West End Mennonite Fellowship. "In the early days of West End, we felt so alone. More help from other churches would have helped."

In 1994, West End got off to a slow start as a second service that met Sunday afternoons under the umbrella of Charlotte Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster. Five years later, when Charlotte Street moved into a new facility and became James Street Mennonite Church, West End found its own home in a renovated corner bar. Members splashed a colorful mural on an outside wall and named themselves "a church for all people." By 2003 the church had grown to more than 100 regular attenders, many of whom came from the city.

Berthold, a first-generation Christian from Munich, Germany, who came to Christ through the outreach of a Youth Evangelism and Service (YES) team from Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM), felt he had learned church planting the hard way. In designing Mobilization, Bertold says, he is eager to identify and equip both new believers and those from traditional Mennonite backgrounds whom God may be calling into church leadership. "The church is on a vital mission for which many leaders are needed," he says.

Berthold last year initiated discussions with leaders of Lancaster Conference and Eastern Mennonite Missions. Conference moderator Keith Weaver had articulated a vision for a vigorous new church-planting movement stretching up and down the East Coast. EMM leaders had a heart to see alumni of the YES program or of other discipleship training plug into church planting and outreach in urban settings. Might West End become a more intentional training ground for church planters for the conference?

The West End leadership team went to work designing Mobilization, of which the Focus team is a part. The grassroots training invites people to commit to a full year of immersion in the life of West End with (1) incarnational ministry with a mentor, (2) formal monthly teaching sessions with experienced church planters and (3) monthly team processing sessions for discussion, reflection and prayer.

"It's rigorous," Berthold says. "We expect commitment and want people to be stretched. Our goal is to have the Focus team represent the heart of the church, even while including others who come from outside West End."

EMM photo by Dale D. Gehman

Melanie Byler (center), a member of the Focus team at West End Mennonite Fellowship in Lancaster, Pa., visits with Francie Metzger (left), a new attender, and Amanda Kohl, a member of the congregation's youth group. The Focus team is part of a West End initiative to develop leaders and plant churches.

West End leaders interviewed possible candidates and selected 12 Focus team members to begin the yearlong training program in September 2003. All came with some leadership and/or short-term mission experience but were looking for more opportunities to be involved in church leadership. All know they may move on to other church contexts or may feel led to join a core group that would multiply out from West End in another year or so to plant another church.

"It's been so special getting to know people here at West End and to see God at work. We each have a mentor and are discovering new things about ourselves," says Angie Brenneman, a young Focus team member who previously served on a YES team in Indonesia.

Phil Wrightstone, a 50-something member of the team, had previous pastoral experience before he hit bottom and ended up at Water Street Rescue Mission. "Through the healing and accepting environment of West End and now this Focus group, I'm experiencing restoration," he says.

"It's going well," Berthold says. "We're hoping that Focus can also serve as a reproducible model for other churches. I believe God wants us to be more intentional about training church planters in the congregational setting. When the church is alive, it will grow … and reproduce."—*EMM News Service*

MCC U.N. Office appoints new director, anticipates new directions for its work

Graver

The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) United Nations Liaison Office in New York has named Molly Graver, a lawyer with extensive human rights experience, as its new director. Her appointment comes at a time when the office is exploring new avenues for advocacy, particularly on Africa-related issues.

A graduate of Maryknoll School of Theology and City University of New York School of Law, Graver served in El Salvador from 1995 to 1997 through the Church of the Brethren. There she worked with a women's human-rights group. Witnessing her co-workers' nonviolent resistance of oppression and their affirmation of life-giving reflection and action deepened her own commitment to these practices, she says.

Graver comes to the position from her most recent position as an attorney for the New York State Court of Appeals. She has also worked on human-rights issues for the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York and the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal.

The United Nations, Graver believes, "although not a panacea for the world's injustices, is a forum where the concerns of the poorest and most marginalized peoples and nations can be addressed" and more powerful nations can be held accountable.

The MCC U.N. Office is a Christian pacifist presence in this forum. It monitors policies that affect MCC and serves as a conduit between MCC workers and the work of the United Nations.

Begun in 1991 as a one-person, part-time operation, the office has expanded to include a full-time director and interns with a permanent office near the U.N. building in midtown Manhattan. Former director John Rempel, now a professor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, built a strong network of connections with officials and other organizations during his decade-plus with the program.

In recent years, the U.N. Office's advocacy efforts have centered on Iraq and Israel-Palestine issues, with the office taking the lead in creating several important working groups. While assuming that the Middle East will remain an important focus, the office is also exploring new directions. Bob Herr, director of the MCC Peace Office, which supervises the U.N. Office, said strengthening involvement with Africa and choosing one or two locations or issues on which to focus is a priority.

As part of this effort,an intern from Africa selected by Mennonite World Conference (MWC) will join office staff beginning in August. The first intern, Frank Magare, is a member of the Tanzanian Mennonite Church.

Other possible areas of focus include U.S. relations with Iran.

In addition to Graver's appointment and the new MWC-selected intern, the U.N. Office continues to offer an internship for young adults. Most interns have come from Mennonite churches in Canada or the United States, but David Blough, who joined the staff last month, is from Paris, France.

"With a new director and adding a new intern, this is really a new chapter for the office," Herr says. "We're feeling a lot of optimism and excitement for the opportunities this will bring."—*Rachel B. Miller Moreland of MCC News Service*

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Choice Books sets another sales record

Book ministry surpasses 4 million mark

For the 18th consecutive year, Choice Books posted record sales in 2003, surpassing the milestone of 4 million books sold.

The inter-Anabaptist book evangelism ministry sold 4,010,325 books from more than 7,000 displays. At that rate, Choice Books sold 10,987 books per day, 458 books per hour and nearly eight books per minute.

"God has done a great work among us, and we pray that many hearts and lives will be touched through the reading of these Christian books," says board chair Norman Shenk. Adds chief executive officer John Bomberger: "The ministry continues to grow geographically and numerically, reaching new locations and levels of opportunity. It's exciting to know how one book can make a difference in a person's life. … To think what 4 million books can do is awesome."

Choice Books' highest retail account last year was Detroit International Airport, which sold 14,936, worth $155,929, from eight displays scattered throughout the airport. Top volume accounts in other categories were:

- Army Air Force Exchange Service location—AAFES No. 1040303, Andrews Air Force Base, Md., 7,357 books from one display.
- Drugstore—CVS pharmacy No. 2005, District Heights, Md., 3,399 books from two displays.
- General merchandise store—Lehman's, Kidron, Ohio, 8,100 books from three displays.
- Hospital gift shop—Methodist Hospital, Indianapolis, 3,469 books from one display.
- Hotel/motel—Skyland Lodge, Luray, Va., 1,500 books from one display.
- Independent supermarket—Shady Maple Farm Market, East Earl, Pa., 1,913 books from one display.
- Mass merchandise store—Wal-Mart No. 2799, Clinton, Md., 15,198 books from one display.
- Restaurant—Das Essenhaus, Middlebury, Ind., 6,859 books from three displays.
- Supermarket chain store—Giant Food No. 247, Largo, Md., 10,377 books from three displays.
- Travel center store—Flying J No. 500250, Ehrenberg, Ariz., 2,514 books from one display.

Choice Books employs about 200 staff and volunteers to distribute Christian and inspirational books in English and Spanish in the general marketplace. The organization operates a network of nine regional distributors from coast to coast who work with Choice Books' central office in Harrisonburg, Va.—*E. Dale Mast*

God has done a great work among us, and we pray that many hearts and lives will be touched through the reading of these Christian books.
—Norman Shenk

Manitoba considers Native ministries

In the wake of Mennonite Church Canada's dramatic cuts to its Native Ministries program, several Manitoba congregations are working to fill the gaps.

Morden Mennonite Church and Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church are discussing ways of joining with Steinbach Mennonite Church, which for years has sent teams to Manigotagan Community Fellowship to teach vacation Bible school.

Other efforts include Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church in Winnipeg helping support Riverton Fellowship Circles, and Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg relating to Neill and Edith Von Gunten, Riverton's pastoral couple.

"We are working with some other arrangements and linkages between [Mennonite Church] Manitoba congregations and northern congregations," says Mennonite Church Canada staff member Walter Franz. "We are sorting out how we can partner."

Says Norm Voth, director of evangelism and service for Mennonite Church Manitoba: "Many of these congregations are quite passionate about their northern relationships. Some have committed themselves to additional funding to help staff carry out their work. … One of my dreams is that we will work with and give and receive ministry with the northern communities as brothers and sisters in the faith.—*Canadian Mennonite*

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•fax 574-535-6050

•1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794

WORKERS

Gerber, Lowell K., was installed Sept. 21 as lead pastor at Lititz (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Ostlund, Jim, was ordained Feb. 1 at Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan.

Stopher, Wanda, was installed Jan. 4 as associate pastor of Central Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Brubacher, Emma Victoria, Dec. 9, to Dennis and Marie Healey Brubacher, Elmira, Ont.

Burke, Taylor Paige, Dec. 30, to Mark and Charlene Rush Burke, Telford, Pa.

Crilow, Alivia Janel, Jan. 6, to Ryan and Tricia Dye Crilow, Holmesville, Ohio.

Derstine, Aiden Wendell, Dec. 28, to Wendell and Jana Alderfer Derstine, Telford, Pa.

Driscoll, Franklin Gene, Oct. 14, to Darin and Katie Driscoll, Bloomington, Ill.

Dyck, Claire Elizabeth Gulnara, July 24, 2002, received for adoption Dec. 15 by Mary Dyck, Normal, Ill.

Friesen, Ella Marie, Dec. 22, to Evan and Kristen Ratzlaff Friesen, Dallas, Texas.

Graber, Andrew Roman, Oct. 7, to Terry and DeLane Miller Graber, Veliky Novgorod, Russia.

Hertzler, Micah Jonathan, Jan. 5, to John and Janelle Shantz Hertzler, Det Udom, Thailand.

Holsinger, Ravi Brooks Yoder, Dec. 18, to Adam Yoder and Jennifer Holsinger, Seattle, Wa.

Hostetter, Joshua Carl, Nov. 12, to Randy and JoAnne Martin Hostetter, Stevens, Pa.

Kaufman, Aaron Jacob, Dec. 14, to Douglas and Tonya Kuhn Kaufman, Hollsopple, Pa.

Kehr, Braden Stanley, Dec. 26, to Jerry and Monica Leaman Kehr, Portland, Mich.

Kephart, Alyssa Jade Rosalie, Dec. 21, to Damon and Jennifer Clark Kephart, Martinsburg, Pa.

Klassen, Olivia Elizabeth, Nov. 6, to Brigham and Lori Buckwalter Klassen, Mountain Lake, Minn.

Knepp, Ryan Fisher, Dec. 12, to Trent and Rachel Miller Knepp, Sarasota, Fla.

Landis, Keldon Pierre, Dec. 6, to Rodney and Lynn LaLonde Landis, Gatineau, Quebec.

Lowe, Andrew David, Dec. 22, to Tony and Cyndee Showalter Lowe, Timberville, Va.

McIlvaine, Anne Lousie, Dec. 31, to David and Joanne Groff McIlvaine, Lancaster, Pa.

Miller, Noah, Dec. 27, to Nate and Stacey Miller, St. Louis, Mo.

Murphy, Megan Renee, Dec. 11, to Michael and Denise Clemens Murphy, Mishawaka, Ind.

Neufeld-Wall, Sadie Hope, Jan. 2, to Scott and Mary Beth Neufeld-Wall, St. Louis, Mo.

Ott, Carson Jacob, Dec. 29, to Justin and Tammy Eggers Ott, Henderson, Neb.

Overbeck, Brett Ryan, Dec. 20, to David and Heather Delp Overbeck, Pipersville, Pa.

Ratzlaff, Megan Elizabeth, Dec. 18, to Ric and Susie Morgan Ratzlaff, Buhler, Kan.

Shelly, Nicholas Victor, Dec. 25, to R. Lucas and Karen Gagliardino Shelly, Chambersburg, Pa.

Sommers, Kaydri Lean, Dec. 8, to Scott and Kami Woodring Sommers, Hartville, Ohio.

Springer, Allie Mae, Nov. 29, to Ross and Amy Nafziger Springer, Martinsburg, Pa.

Sweitzer, Hannah Marie, Dec. 8, to Jason and Joann Bollinger Sweitzer, Auburn, Ind.

Thompson, Hailey Nicole, Dec. 31, to Tim and Carla Miller Thompson, Goshen, Ind.

Waggoner, Nicholas Caerwyn Arkell, Sept. 30, to Jason and Amy Waggoner, Normal, Ill.

Wagler, Caleb Marcus, Dec. 28, to Marcus and Julie Shantz Wagler, Baden, Ont.

Walker, Ryan Joshua, Nov. 27, to Brian and Heidi Martin Walker, Lancaster, Pa.

Weitzel, Vendala Kay, Dec. 20, to Samuel and Melissa Simmons Weitzel, Roaring Spring, Pa.

Welch, Emma Grace, Nov. 14, to Stephen and Carol Ness Welch, Lititz, Pa.

Wood, Michael Anthony, Nov. 11, to Tony and Hannah Greenawalt Wood, Goshen, Ind.

Wyse, Quinn Joshua, Dec. 23, to Barnaby and Michelle Thuma Wyse, Archbold, Ohio.

Yliniemi, Caeden Knight, Oct. 29, to Seth and Laura Book Yliniemi, Detroit Lakes, Mich.

MARRIAGES

Ackerman/Cassel: Anje Ackerman, Newport News, Va., and Philip Cassel, Souderton, Pa., Nov. 23 at the home of Dorothy Baxter, Gloucester, Va.

Bauman/Martin: Randy Bauman, Elmira, Ont., and Jaclyn Martin, Elmira, Nov. 1 at Floradale (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Bauman/Ratcliffe: Megan Bauman, Waterloo, Ont., and Mike Ratcliffe, Elmira, Ont., Dec. 27 at Floradale (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Brenneman/Meganathan: Sara Brenneman, Iowa City, Iowa, and Francis Meganathan, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Dec. 27 at First Mennonite Church, Iowa City.

Cerda/Ropp: Angie Cerda, San Antonio, Texas, and Stacey Ropp, Sarasota, Fla., Sept. 27 in San Antonio.

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Friesen/Sawatzky: Reynold Friesen, Waterloo, Ont., and Tammy Sawatzky, Goshen, Ind., Sept. 27 at Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo.

Keirn/Koehn: Carly Keirn, Lancaster, Pa., and Jesse Koehn, Lahona, Okla., Oct. 11 in Lahona, Okla.

Kossler/Moshier: Mark Kossler, Bloomington, Ill., and Karla Moshier, Normal, Ill., Dec. 27 at Epiphany Catholic Church, Normal.

Lehman/Zuercher: Doris Lehman, Orrville, Ohio, and Clayton Zuercher, Orrville, Dec. 26 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Martin/Maust: Kendall Martin, Phoenix, Ariz., and Deborah Maust, Bloomington, Ill., Sept. 13 at Mennonite Church of Normal (Ill.).

Meyer/Peitz: Ryan Meyer, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, and Heather Peitz, Mt. Pleasant, Nov. 15 at Wayland (Iowa) Mennonite Church.

Miller/Yoder: Eloise Miller, Archbold, Ohio, and Meredith Yoder, Leo, Ind., Jan. 3 at Tedrow Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Reeser/White: Andy Reeser, Heyworth, Ill., and Beth White, Washington, Ill., Nov. 8 at Mennonite Church of Normal (Ill.).

Rinner/Stille: Tye Rinner, Wayland, Iowa, and Diane Stille, Washington, Iowa, Dec. 20 at Wayland Mennonite Church.

Vajen/Yoder: Amber Vajen, Archbold, Ohio, and Ryan Yoder, Archbold, Nov. 15 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

DEATHS

Allison, James E. "Gene", 74, Johnstown, Pa., died Dec. 15. Spouse: Barbara K. Pattison Allison. Parents: James K. and Margaret Young Allison. Children: James R., Ruth Ann Magliocca, Kathy J. Smith; two grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 18 at Thomas Mennonite Church, Hollsopple, Pa.

Beck, Vincent, 80, Archbold, Ohio, died Dec. 29. Spouse: Mary Beck. Parents: Ervin and Esther Beck. Children: Kirk, William; six grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 1 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Brubaker, Paul J., 88, Lititz, Pa., died Dec. 9. Spouse: Martha Herr Brubaker (deceased). Parents: Jacob S. and Anna Mae Garber Brubaker. Children: Paul, John, Robert, Dale, David; nine grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 12 at Landis Valley Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Cressman, Mary Shantz, 86, Waterloo, Ont., died Dec. 11. Spouse: Horace Cressman. Parents: Simeon and Celina Shantz. Children: Elaine Weber, Mark, Brenda Weber, Mary Jane Guerin; 12 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 15 at Breslau (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Davidhizar, Mary, 92, Wakarusa, Ind., died Dec. 15. Spouse: Otis Davidhizar (deceased). Parents: Albert and Ellen Enders. Children: Nancy Parcell, Eleanor Shoup, James; seven grandchildren; 27 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 21 at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa.

Enns, Ella Mae Friesen, 78, Inman, Kan., died Oct. 30. Spouse: Waldo Enns. Parents: Pete and Anna Pauls Friesen. Children: Joan Burdette, Kathy Voth; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 3 in Inman.

Ernst, Earl, 82, Colorado Springs, Colo., died Dec. 15. Spouse: Roberta Beckler Ernst. Parents: Tillis and Lydia Stutzman Ernst. Children: Ron, Roger, Bernard, Leonard; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 18 at Beth-El Mennonite Church, Colorado Springs.

Forrester, Kathryn Jantzi, 91, Xenia, Ohio, died Dec. 23. Spouse: Charles Forrester (deceased). Parents: Solomon and Anna Lehman Jantzi. Children: Dale, Beryl, Anna Mae Weaver, Martha Loveland; 15 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren; 10 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 29 at Croghan (N.Y.) Mennonite Church.

Frey, Steven, 48, Archbold, Ohio, died Dec. 24. Parents: A. Dale and Kathryn Frey. Child: Stephanie. Funeral: Dec. 28 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Gingerich, Ruby Ellen Kinsinger, 76, Kalona, Iowa, died Dec. 29. Spouse: Alva Gingerich. Parents: John and Katie Gingerich Kinsinger. Children: Judy, Randy, Marcia, Shari Nye, Kenton (deceased); 10 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 31 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Goering, Agnes Friesen, 89, Inman, Kan., died Oct. 22. Spouse: Ervin B. Goering (deceased). Parents: Dietrich and Marie Wiens Friesen. Children: Eldon "Jim", Velma Voth, Mary Higgins; 13 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 25 in Inman.

Goerzen, Tammie McKim, 43, Newton, Kan., died Dec. 27 of a heart attack. Spouse: Michael Goerzen. Parents: Carl and Elizabeth Claassen McKim. Children: Tara, Brett, Shane. Funeral: Dec. 31 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton.

Lambright, Harold, 87, Lagrange, Ind., died Jan. 11. Spouse: (1st) Elizabeth Frye Lambright (deceased), (2nd) Ruth Miller Lambright. Parents: Michael and Susanna Yoder Lambright. Children: Birdena Bollenbocker, Karen Kotleba, Marcile Lindsey, Karl, Weldon, Glendon, Marlin; 24 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 15 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind.

Lederman, Richard, 71, Leo, Ind., died Dec. 30 of cancer. Spouse: Joanne Lederman. Parents: Alpheus and Edythe Lederman. Children: Michael, Karen Stauffer; nine grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 2 at North Leo Mennonite Church, Leo-Cedarville, Ind.

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Lehman, Lawrence "Larry", 78, Dalton, Ohio, died Dec. 22. Spouse: Gilda Lehman. Parents: Elmer and Rosella Lehman. Children: Lucinda Gill, Lorene Arnold, Lynn; six grandchildren; nine step-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 27 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Leinbach, Earl, 72, Wakarusa, Ind., died Nov. 13 of a heart attack. Spouse: Betty Hoover Leinbach. Parents: John and Ada Blosser Leinbach. Children: Robert, Kevin, Richard, Kenneth, Kathy; nine grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 17 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Marner, Lottie Yoder, 95, Kalona, Iowa, died Dec. 9. Spouse: Omar Marner (deceased). Parents: John A. and Mary Martin Yoder. Children: Gordon, Larry, Jane Kopsa, Kenneth; seven grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 13 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona.

McCullough, Leatha Shoemaker Derusha, 86, Rexton, Mich., died Dec. 30. Spouse: (1st) Richard Derusha (deceased), (2nd) John McCullough (deceased). Parents: Burton and Zelma Keech Shoemaker. Children: Harold, Donald, Raymond, Jean Bentley, Jan Clark, Arlene Pechta; 22 grandchildren; 43 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 2 at Rexton Mennonite Church.

Meyer, Fred, 71, Rittman, Ohio, died Dec. 31 of cancer. Spouse: Mim Meyer. Parents: Elmer and Sarah Liechty Meyer. Children: John, Steve, Tom, Mary Wiebe, Lois Chupp; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 3 at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville, Ohio.

Mininger, Emmalee Aden, 4 1/2 months, Greeley, Colo., died Dec. 2 of SIDS. Parents: Nolan and Vanessa Unruh Mininger. Sibling: Brooklyn. Funeral: Dec. 6 at Greeley Mennonite Church.

Moshier, Esther, 91, Lowville, N.Y., died Dec. 15. Spouse: Reuben M. Moshier (deceased). Parents: Andrew and Anna Widrick Roggie. Children: Loren, Elwood, Carolyn Schaffer; 10 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 20 at Lowville Mennonite Church.

Nafziger, Richard, 57, Archbold, Ohio, died Dec. 27. Spouse: Sara Nafziger. Parents: Edwin and Nola Nafziger. Children: Douglas, Michele; two grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 31 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Ratzlaff, Emma Schroeder, 98, Buhler, Kan., died Nov. 22. Spouse: Edward H. Ratzlaff (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Agnes Warkentin Schroeder. Children: John E., Darlene M. Hein; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 26 at Buhler Mennonite Church.

Rice, Lorraine Wing, 73, Columbiana, Ohio, died Jan. 3. Spouse: Lester Rice (deceased). Parents: Brice and Elsie Fitch Wing. Children: Connie Neuenschwander, David, Debbie Glick, Jay; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 7 at Leetonia (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Ropp, Peter, 98, Normal, Ill., died Dec. 15. Spouse: Anna Kropf Ropp. Parents: Edwin and Alvina Ropp. Children: Allen E., Ronald D., Paul S.; nine grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 18 at Mennonite Church of Normal.

Roth, Allen John, 80, Iowa City, Iowa, died Dec. 25 of cancer. Spouse: Minnie Lavina York (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Elfie Birky Roth. Children: Judy Martin, Sharon Piper, Steven, Larry; 11 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 28 at First Mennonite Church, Iowa City.

Shaffer, Ruth L. Speicher, 103, Boswell, Pa., died Oct. 11. Spouse: Lester Shaffer (deceased). Parents: John J. and Mary Lohr Speicher. Children: Stella Edmiston, John, Zane, Lester, Clair, Mary Lawrence. Funeral: Oct. 15 at Thomas Mennonite Church, Hollsopple, Pa.

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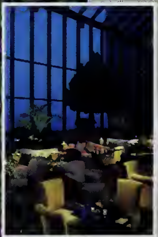

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Short, Carmaleta Yoder, 77, Archbold, Ohio, died Dec. 23. Spouse: Leon Short (deceased). Parents: Raymond and Jessie Zaerr Yoder. Children: LaVon, Keith; seven grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 27 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Stalter, Lois Wingard, 84, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 21. Spouse: Milo D. Stalter. Parents: Hiram and Nannie Miller Wingard. Children: Sandra Gingerich, Linda Butti, Carl D. (deceased); six grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 27 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Wadsworth, Ohio.

Stuckey, Gladys Grieser, 87, West Unity, Ohio, died Dec. 25. Spouse: Charles Stuckey (deceased). Parents: Menno and Elizabeth Sauder Grieser. Children: Marvin, James: three grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; one great grandchild; six step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 30 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Stutzman, Lawrence D., 74, Commerce City, Colo., died Nov. 11. Spouse: Ruby Stutzman. Parents: Earl and Esther Stutzman. Children: Lori Henry, Marc; four grandchildren; six step-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 14 at Commerce City and Nov. 17 at Milford, Neb.

Unruh, Eskil, 80, Goessel, Kan., died Dec. 25. Parents: Jacob S. and Sara Friesen Unruh. Funeral: Dec. 30 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Woelk, Menno, 88, Newport, Wash., died Dec. 17. Spouse; Dorothy Woelk. Parents: Abram and Anna Woelk. Children: Milton, Michael, Ruth Bates, Marilyn Seumptewa, Mary Lou Aponte, Peter, Ann Waggoner, Don, Leona; 28 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 22 at Spring Valley Mennonite Church, Newport.

Yoder, Velma M. Miller, 89, Kalona, Iowa, died Dec. 26. Spouse: Lyle Yoder (deceased). Parents: Abner and Eliza Yoder Miller. Children: Phyllis Litwiller, Wilford, Kenneth, Zelda Stoltzfus; 11 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 29 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Zuercher, Verda, 89, Kidron, Ohio, died Dec. 28. Spouse: Ivan Zuercher (deceased). Parents: Peter and Barbara Amstutz. Children: Linda Sommer, Paul, Carol Brubaker; two grandchildren; four step-grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 31 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

2003 *The Mennonite* Index now online

Do you need to find an article for a research paper? Or, are you interested in re-reading the Bible study series on the Beatitudes but can't remember which issues it was in? Go to www.The Mennonite .org and click on "The Magazine." In the drop down box select "Research Index."

Please note that the 2003 author index will soon be added to the index.

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To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Marla Cole, or email TheMennonite@TheMennonite.org.

Mennonite Mission Network job opening for May 2004. ***DEO associate director*** (located in Newton, Kan.) to provide leadership and administration of DEO, a yearlong mission program that challenges young adults to experience an intimate encounter with Jesus, radical outreach and practical service. Responsibilities include supervision of participants, training and program coordination and recruitment. Candidate will have an interest in and understanding of young adults and discipleship. Bringing a background of mission, service or other ministry, the candidate will be a good communicator in public, personally, by phone and through email, open and able to travel independently and maintain flexible hours. People oriented, compassionate, positive and committed to discipleship, this person will work as part of a team, organize and plan activities and give counsel in addressing issues with participants, cross-cultural sites and program development.

Interested persons may find more information by calling Human Resources at 866-866-2872 or 574-523-3008 or at www.mennonitemission.net. Please email a letter of interest and resumé to staffrecruitment@mennonitemission.net or by mail to Mennonite Mission Network Human Resources, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks two ***event pastors,*** one male and one female, for !Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth, full-time from July 8 to Aug. 4. These pastors will accompany the 15 high school !Explore participants for their intensive 18-day group experience. Qualifications include several years experience as a congregational pastor and working with youth; ability to nurture youth through times of spiritual, intellectual and emotional growth; creativity in styles of worship, prayer and spiritual disciplines; knowledge of and commitment to the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith; and an undergraduate degree with additional seminary education preferred. Responsibilities include assisting in preparations for the youth group experience, leading and directing worship and discussions, and being physically, emotionally and mentally present with youth during this experience.

To apply, send resume and letter of application by March 1 to Andy Brubacher Kaethler, !Explore Director, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517; andybk@ambs.edu. A complete job description is available on the AMBS Web site: www.ambs.edu/!Explore.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks a ***library project manager*** to coordinate construction of a new library. This person will work with seminary administrators and architects and building contractors throughout the design and construction phases. The project manager, supervised by the AMBS president, will collaborate with the AMBS librarian, facilitate the work of the Library Building Committee and manage internal communication regarding the building project. Qualifications include commitment to the values and vision of AMBS, experience in project management and building construction, excellent communication and interpersonal skills and commitment to sustainable and fiscally responsible construction. The seminary seeks at least a two-year part-time commitment and is prepared to negotiate salary. Qualified volunteers are encouraged to apply.

Send resume and letter of application to Nelson Kraybill, AMBS President, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, or nkraybill@ambs.edu. For more information, see the AMBS Web site: www.ambs.edu; select Welcome, then News, Events, Jobs.

Eastern Mennonite High School has the following teaching position openings for the 2004-05 school year: ***science 8 & 9, high school English and high school English/Bible.*** If you share the call for distinctively Mennonite education in a Christ-centered academic environment we welcome your inquiry and application. Please express your interest to Paul G. Leaman, Principal, via person, email leamanp@emhs.net or phone 540-432-4502. EMHS is an equal opportunity employer.

Jamaica Mennonite Church announces openings for two ***family practice physicians*** to work in church clinics: Good Tidings Mennonite Church, Kingston (urban), and Joyland Mennonite Church, St. Elizabeth (rural). Physicians are responsible for overall health of patients and oversight of nurse assistants and medical records personnel. Physicians must be currently licensed, committed to the Anabaptist faith, available for three to five years and start by September or as soon as possible. For information, contact Beth Brunk, HR Coordinator, Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions, Harrisonburg, Va.; 540-434-9727 or info@vmbm.org.

Western Mennonite School Board of Directors has announced a search for applicants for the position of ***principal*** to begin July 2004. Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students both local and at a distance. Located on 45 acres in the Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience with a comprehensive vision for expanding enrollment, program and facilities. Requests for information can be addressed to Search Committee, Western Mennonite School, 9045 Wallace Road NW, Salem, OR 97304; wmsoffice@telelport.com.

Hard Cases: Confronting the Spirit World, a ***consultation at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary,*** Elkhart, Ind., April 15-17. This consultation will bring together pastors, teachers and therapists to explore difficult cases which raise questions about the nature of good and evil in the world. Sponsored by the Bondage and Deliverance Committee of the Indiana-Michigan Conference and the Institute of Mennonite Studies at AMBS. To register, contact bsawatzky@ambs.edu or 800-964-2627.

Bluffton College invites applications for the following tenure-track positions beginning August 2004:

Early childhood and special education: doctorate preferred; ABD considered. Certification in early childhood education and experience in literacy. Certification in special education (mild to moderate education needs) preferred. Required minimum of three years K-12 special education experience preferred; graduate-level teaching experience preferred. Teach graduate and undergraduate education courses in curriculum and instruction in early childhood education and literacy. Teach graduate and undergraduate courses in special education (mild to moderate education needs) preferred. Supervise student teachers in early education and special education classrooms.

Secondary education or middle childhood education: doctorate preferred; ABD considered. Evidence of effective teaching crucial. Certification in adolescent/young adult (secondary) education or middle childhood (gr. 4-9) education. Undergraduate and graduate-level teaching in higher education preferred; a minimum of three years teaching at the secondary or middle-childhood level; student teaching supervision experience. Teach undergraduate and graduate education courses in educational foundations, curriculum methods, assessment and classroom management. Supervise early field experience students and student teachers.

Band/instrumental music education: Proven excellence in developing and conducting bands. Strong preference for candidate to have doctorate (or near completion) in instrumental conducting or music education but will consider persons with master's degree. Candidate must show a strong background of public school teaching experience. Demonstrated excellence in college-level teaching is desirable. Brass or percussion background is also desirable. Conduct the Bluffton College-Community Concert Band. Teach undergraduate courses in instrumental music education, supervise student teachers and possibly teach applied lessons. Other areas may include conducting, instrumental methods courses and related areas. Provide leadership for a dynamic music program that is growing. Recruit and advise students.

Biblical studies: Ph.D. required (ABD considered). Specialization in Old or New Testament. Demonstration of commitment to the Anabaptist-Mennonite, peace church tradition. Teach introductory biblical studies courses in an innovative general education program, and advanced courses related to specialization in an expanding religion department. Participation in scholarly and churchly activity expected.

Christian ethics: Ph.D. required (ABD considered). Generalist in Christian ethics, with area of specialization open. Training in theology desirable. Demonstration of commitment to the Anabaptist-Mennonite, peace church tradition. Teach multiple sections of introductory course in Christian ethics in an innovative general education program, possibly a section of Christian theology and advanced courses related to specialization in an expanding religion department. Participation in scholarly and churchly activity expected.

Review of applications begins immediately. Additional information is available at www.bluffton.edu. Send letter of interest, vita, three letters of reference (submitted directly from referee) and official transcripts to Elaine Suderman, Administrative Assistant for Academic Affairs, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Ste. 1, Bluffton, OH 45817-1196. EOE. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply.

Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio, is seeking candidates for the full-time position of ***minister of youth.*** Candidates should have strong Anabaptist beliefs and have a passion for children, youth and young adults. Full job description is available by contacting Kelvin Friesen at 419-445-0856 or kelfriesen@rtecexpress.net.

South Hutchinson Mennonite Church, a growing, missional, purpose-driven church in central Kansas, is seeking a full-time ***pastor*** in student ministry. Must have a heart for lost youth, discipling young believers, resourcing adult helpers and manage a potential group of 100. Contact the church at 808 S. Poplar, South Hutchinson, KS 67505. Email pastorhoward@shmc-online.net.

Mennonite Central Committee is accepting applications for the position of ***MCC Central States executive director.*** The director provides vision and oversight for all MCC programs in Central States. Familiarity with MCC constituency, strong relational administrative skills and cultural competency required. Experience with budgeting, administration, Spanish language skills preferred. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply. Significant travel time within the United States.

Contact Charmayne Brubaker, 717-859-1151, cdb@mcc.org or your nearest MCC office for the full job description. Application review begins February 2004. Position available at that time.

Shirati Hospital (East Africa) ***fund-raiser dinner,*** March 13 at 6:30 p.m. in Mt. Joy, Pa. Slide show by Dr. Stan Godshall, stories by Rev. Don Jacobs and special Ukrainian music by the Ostopeirko family. Donations will be used to purchase necessary equipment and medical supplies. For reservations/directions call Dr. Tom Ruth, 717-399-9499 or send email to friends-of-shirati@comcast.net. Donations to Friends of Shirati, c/o EMM, Box 458, Salunga, PA 17538.

MCC Bike San Juans 2004, Aug. 2-6. ***Cycle the paradise islets*** of Orcas, San Juan, Shaw and Lopez in Washington for the benefit of MCC. Enthusiastic support, delicious meals and camping accommodations provided by MCC Bike Oregon. A good time guaranteed! Contact information: www.mcc.org/Westcoast/biketour/; Ken Beachy at 503-634-2604 or beachykn@web-ster.com.

Penn View Christian School is seeking an elementary school ***principal*** for kindergarten through fifth grade. Teaching experience, an advanced degree and strong leadership skills are required. Administrative experience is preferred. This position is available in the summer of 2004. Penn View, affiliated with area Mennonite churches, serves 520 students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Please contact Robert Rutt at 215-723-1196 or 420 Cowpath Road, Souderton, PA 18964; email brutt@pennview.org; Web site: www.pennview.org.

Penn View Christian School is seeking a ***preschool instructor*** for preschool classes for 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds. This position begins with the 2004-05 academic year. Candidates should possess an early childhood or elementary certification and have a love for young children. Please contact Sandra Harrell at 215-723-1196 or 420 Cowpath Road, Souderton, PA 18964; email sharrell@pennview.org; Web site: www.pennview.org.

Chicago Mennonite Learning Center, a Christian urban K-8 school, seeks ***director of development*** beginning summer 2004. Responsibilities include coordinating comprehensive fund-raising efforts; directing the preparation and distribution of promotional materials; coordinating direct mail campaigns; overseeing preparation of grant applications; maintaining relationships with supporting conferences, congregations and individuals; and expanding the donor base. Desirable qualifications: bachelor's degree in business, marketing, education or related field; two or more years of development work experience; genuine commitment to the mission of the school; excellent written and verbal communication skills; ability to relate effectively to a diverse constituency.

Send letter of application and current resumé to Search Committee, Chicago Mennonite Learning Center, 4647 W. 47th Str., Chicago, IL 60632. For further information contact Ib Thomsen, Principal, 773-735-9304.

Central California Mennonite Residential Services in Fresno, Calif., seeks a full-time ***executive director.*** CCMRS provides residential services and programs to persons with developmental disabilities. It is affiliated with West Coast MCC and with Mennonite Health Services. Deadline for applications is March 1.

For further information and application forms please contact Ken Janzen, Board of Directors, Central Calif. Mennonite Residential Services, P. O. Box 5298, Fresno, CA 93755-5298; email ccmrs@mindspring.com.

Mennonite Village seeks a ***foundation director*** with excellent interpersonal and communication skills. Experience in development and fund-raising preferred. Contact Ron Litwiller, Mennonite Village, 5353 Columbus St. SE, Albany, OR 97322, email ron@mennonitevillage.org; Web site: www.mennonitevillage.org.

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Chinese poverty opportunity for Christians

Rich Preheim

This wasn't supposed to happen under communism. Yet China is home to untold millions of homeless and poverty-stricken people, reports *Christianity Today.* But this is something else that wasn't supposed to happen under communism: a government-initiated role for Christians to help alleviate the country's social ills.

The government is not only encouraging the private social sector but also reluctantly asking Western Christians to train the leaders of new charities. Team Resources, a Christian consulting firm based in Atlanta, in December 2003 held the first formal class to train the heads of Chinese nongovernmental organizations.

The Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs is drafting new guidelines, "The Eight Standards for Non-Profits," which will not exclude religious groups.

Carol Hamrin, a longtime China watcher who works with the Christian consulting firm ChinaSource, says Western and Chinese scholars are studying the social underpinnings of economic success and are coming to some startling conclusions. "The slogan of this administrative reform—'Small government, big society'—represents a significant change of concept," she says.

But change doesn't come without opposition. "The ultra-leftists believe that the government should take care of these problems," said Yan Mingfu, until recently the president of the government-run Chinese Charity Federation and whose father was a YMCA leader, "and that public welfare should replace [private] charity."

TIDBITS

More than 9,200 U.S. congregations have a broadcast ministry.—NRB

Between 1960 and 1995, the fastest growing U.S. denomination was the Church of God in Christ, with 858 percent growth.—*Cybercast News Service*

The number of U.S. Christian radio stations tripled during the 1970s to nearly 1,000.—*Wireless Age*

Germany is home to 3.2 million Muslims.—*Christian Science Monitor*

Nearly 25 percent of the 11,178 congregations of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are named "First."—*The Christian Century*

Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego has changed its athletic teams' nickname from Crusaders to Sea Lions because the former was "not reflective of the character and values of the university."—*Holiness Today*

In the face of disagreement

What's a church to do when a politician or other prominent member of the flock professes allegiance to the faith but supports measures on issues such as abortion, capital punishment, economic justice and homosexuality that run counter to the church's teaching?

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops have created a seven-member task force to address that question, according to *National Catholic Reporter.*

"Some Catholic politicians defy church teaching in their policy advocacy and legislative votes," task force head John Ricard of Pensacola-Tallahassee, Fla., told the bishops' semiannual meeting in November 2003. "We need to persuade, not just proclaim, to engage, not just condemn. But we must also tell the truth."

Pro-choice Catholics are the most frequent source of complaint. One group is calling on the bishops to deny the Eucharist to pro-choice politicians. But the task force will not limit its guidance to that area. "We have to be very careful not to look like we're targeting somebody," said Joseph Sullivan of Brooklyn, N.Y.

Theodore McCarrick, cardinal from Washington, said a harsh approach to politicians could backfire. "We cannot cut ourselves off from mutually respectful dialogue with these officials," he said, noting that there are "issues on which we do not agree."

Resurrection story

Davey and Goliath are making a comeback. The 1960s and '70s animated duo of Davey Hansen and his talking dog, Goliath, is expected to return to TV later this year with a one-hour holiday special, *Davey and Goliath's Snowboard Christmas.* It will be the first new program in 30 years.

Davey and Goliath are the property of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which has joined with DandG Licensing to increase Davey and Goliath's visibility. DandG Licensing was created exclusively for the project, which is to "bring moral and religious faith-based values to a new generation of chidren in lively and engaging ways," says *Worldwide Faith News.*

In addition to the holiday TV special, plans call for relaunching classic Davey and Goliath episodes, lunch boxes, bobble-head dolls, bendable toys, clothing and more.

It is better to give?

Marcel Mager has discovered the limits of the biblical injunction, "Ask and ye shall receive." Five years ago, the Cloquet, Minn., man donated $126,000 to a local congregation, Cloquet Gospel Tabernacle. Now he wants the money back, and the congregation is refusing.

According to Worldnetdaily.com, Mager claimed he made the donation during a time of emotional distress and thought giving money to the congregation would ease his pain. Mager's wife left him two weeks earlier, and the contribution was nearly all their life savings.

Five months later, Mager asked it to be returned to him, but the congregational leadership said it had already been used for building expansion and renovation. Mager has now sued, and the situation has yet to be resolved. TM

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National Clergy Renewal Program
2004

"As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God." — Psalm 42:1

At the center of the congregation is the pastor. Spiritual guide, scholar, counselor, preacher, administrator, confidant, teacher, pastoral visitor, and friend, a pastor has a privileged position and performs many roles. In season and out, a pastor is called upon to lead communities to the life-giving waters of God.

The National Clergy Renewal Program, offered by Lilly Endowment Inc., is intended to strengthen Christian congregations by providing an opportunity for pastors to step away briefly from the demands of daily parish life and to engage in a period of renewal and reflection. The Endowment will provide approximately 100 grants of up to $45,000 each directly to congregations for support of a renewal program for their pastor.

Applications are now being accepted. Applications must be postmarked by June 25, 2004, and the award announcement will be made by October 2004.

LILLY ENDOWMENT INC.

For information: Send an e-mail to clergyrenewal@yahoo.com; contact the program's Web site: www.clergyrenewal.org, call 317/916-7302; or write Lilly Endowment Inc., Religion Division, 2801 North Meridian Street, Post Office Box 88068, Indianapolis, Indiana 46208. (Indiana clergy should apply only to the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations.)

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Everett J. Thomas

Great expectations

From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.
—Luke 12:48b

As a 50-something, white, male, U.S. citizen there are at least four ways I can sin before noon each day. Each of these sins is usually described as an "ism": racism, sexism, ageism and nationalism. Several of these sins are the focus of articles in this issue.

In her "Grace and Truth" column (page 2), pastor Donna Mast describes the pain she confronts when "well-meaning people" point to Scripture to tell her how wrong she is to be a woman in a pastoral role. In a church that has said the role of ministry is open to men and women, this is sexism.

Racism is a second "ism sin" and February—designated Black History Month—is a time for us to look at ways our church can continue to work at dismantling racism. To that end, Leonard Dow describes the pain he felt in an exchange with a prominent Mennonite lawyer (page 8) and the "environment of fear, mistrust, pain, confusion, disappointment, blame and anger" that he and other African-American leaders experience in Mennonite church circles.

If race, age, sex or nationality occupies the center of the universe, then there is no room there for God.

Ageism is a sin that is mostly hidden in our church and in our country. But it will become increasingly problematic in the next decades. As those born between 1946 and 1964—the ubiquitous and presumptuous baby boomers—demand more privileges and attention, we will learn that mortgaging our children's futures to pay for such privileges is also a grievous sin.

But it is the fourth "ism sin" that confronts us most in 2004: nationalism.

Jesus finished his parable about the faithful and prudent manager in Luke 12 with the warning that "even more will be demanded." Those words stand as a challenge to Christians in our country, the most powerful secular entity in the world. Our country has been given much and much will be expected of us. To that end, the rest of the Christian church around the world recently named some expectations for U.S. Christians, and a German Mennonite has become a primary spokesperson for the ecumenical community.

Fernando Enns, a member of the German Mennonite conference (AMG), helped start the World Council of Churches' Decade Against Violence. Enns, who also preached the Europe Day sermon at Mennonite World Conference in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, on Aug. 13, was quoted extensively in a recent WCC release.

"In Europe," Enns said, "the media portray the church in America as conservative, evangelical and connected to right-wing parties. Many Europeans perceive Americans as merely focused on individual, private religious life."

When we contemplate the decisions made by our nation's leaders, it is tempting to withdraw into private religious life. Our understandings of two kingdoms—the kingdom of this world and God's kingdom—can become a form of denial. Or we may hide behind the fiction that secular powers should not be held accountable to Christian ideals.

But Jesus' parable will not allow us to dodge the responsibility. As citizens of this country, we are among those whom Jesus named—those to whom much has been given. Therefore much will be expected of us. Sisters and brothers in the wider body of Christ are watching us closely.

"We find it a hopeful sign," says Enns, "that many Christians in the United States are mobilized against the death penalty, support international climate treaties and oppose the way prisoners are currently being treated in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba."

Having a European Mennonite tell us how our country should act is not easy to accept. I get defensive. I want to depreciate their histories. I want to recite all the things our country has done and continues to do around the world. But yielding to such temptations is a sin. If race, age, sex or nationality occupies the center of the universe, then there is no room there for God. This year, more than ever, we will need to be sure that center is not occupied by the country in which we live.—*ejt*

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Aliens and strangers on earth

Clarence E. Rempel is a pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob. ... and they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. ... They were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.—Hebrews 11:8-16 NIV

The recent funeral of Magdalene Nickel, 88, provided an opportunity to refocus life's priorities. Magdalene came to the United States in 1952, having experienced the horrors of war—bombings, homelessness, the death of her fiancé, family separation, the Russian occupation and darker things never told.

Through frugality and hard work as a laundress she was able to buy a house in her new homeland just across the street from the church. Yet her German-ness was pronounced, and she always seemed like a stranger in her adopted home.

Magdalene's life is a parable of being a Christian. We live in this world as displaced people. This is our home, but we're not really at home.

Living as a displaced person: Abraham exemplifies the displaced-person way of life. Unlike Magdalene, he wasn't even able to own a permanent home. He lived in a tent like a refugee. This didn't happen because he was careless about life or disregarded God. In his obedience to God he became an alien, a foreigner, a displaced person.

Obedience to God may put us out of sync with the world's ways. Symbols of financial status in your car, home or job diminish in value when you are an obedient-to-God refugee. You evaluate your productivity in terms of the people you've lifted up rather than the people you've climbed over. The most important financial indicator becomes, What did I invest in the kingdom of God?

I often feel like an alien in this world. While I enjoy music, sports and a good-looking car, I'm not crazy about NASCAR, football, the latest movie, quilts, *Survivor* or the Powerball lottery. Sometimes I feel I just don't fit.

I am crazy about following Jesus, about Jesus' way of reaching down the ladder to pull somebody up, about Jesus' way of overcoming evil with good, loving enemies and praying for people who hate you, which puts me out of sync with the American culture of peace through war. I'm crazy about the church, the body of Christ, the social centerpiece of God's plan to redeem the world, while American pop culture sees the church as irrelevant. Pastors are irrelevant, so I'm weird. I hardly know the language of power and domination, the customs of seduction and manipulation. I'm a foreigner.

My wife would say I've overstated my case. I'm a lot more at home in this world than I've let on. I'm just a typical, middle-class, American suburbanite pursuing the American dream of hard work and investing for the future. She may be right.

The closer I move to Jesus and the more obedient I am to the voice of God, the more of a foreigner I'm going to get.

Longing for my home country: I'm getting homesick. I can't yet see the eternal city of God, the New Jerusalem, where life is light and full of joy. "The city where," the Bible says, "there is no death, no mourning or crying or pain." No tears in that city. No war, rape, terrorists, poverty, abuse, addictions, sickness, rocketing medical costs or taxes.

I'm longing for that city, that country. I get tired of living in this one. Don't you? Hebrews 11 says the people living by faith admitted they were aliens and strangers on earth. They were longing for a better country. Today I admit I'm a foreigner. My passport is stamped New Jerusalem, citizen in the kingdom of God. TM

TheMennonite

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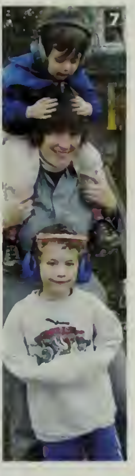
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International community dissuades authorities

Thank you for covering the kidnapping of Juan Castilla Urueta (News Digest, Jan. 20). We appreciate the help in telling stories from down here, especially as they pertain to our immediate community.

In a similar vein, we understand that there are plans by Colombian authorities to arrest and prosecute Ricardo Esquivia on charges of being a member of the guerrillas. More information is available on the JustaPaz web page at www.justapaz.org. I ask *The Mennonite* to help us diffuse information on the case and solicit action on Ricardo's behalf. (See page 7.)

We have been all the more aware of the importance of the international community and global family of faith in these days. It may be the only thing with the power to dissuade the Colombian authorities from carrying out what we believe they intend to do.—*Janna Bowman, Bogotá, Colombia*

Run stories about public education

The Mennonite education issue (Jan. 20) left me feeling wistful for at least a word about the option of education in public or secular settings. While I have no reason to doubt any of the positive experiences in Mennonite education described in the stories, I know that I and many others have also benefitted greatly from education in secular settings. Indeed it was my experience at a secular university after a difficult year at a Mennonite college that helped keep alive my faith in God and commitment to the church.

I'm not suggesting that we pit Mennonite and secular education opportunities against one another as if one were right and the other wrong. God can nurture faith and growth in both settings. Remarkable teachers that care deeply about their students teach in both contexts. So I would love to see a future issue of *The Mennonite* carry at least one positive story about learning and faith development in the context of public education. This, too, is a part of the world that God and hundreds of Mennonite students inhabit.—*Titus Peachey, Lancaster, Pa.*

Need consistent voice on nonviolence

Jan. 18 was Sanctity of Human Life Sunday in this country and was commemorated by many Christian churches. Jan. 22 was the day of the annual March for Life in our nation's capital. I saw not one word of news or commentary about these events in *The Mennonite*, even though these events had numerous grassroots, Mennonite participants.

To our church, whose hue and cry is for nonviolence, peacemaking and justice for all, does it not matter that in our country 43 million infants have been slaughtered and their mothers (and fathers) violated by the abortion industry since our courts made it legal? Do we care about justice, nonviolence and killing only for people over the age of nine months from conception?

It seems our denominational leaders are free to boldly confront and attempt to influence our government to stop the injustice and killing of war. Our message of nonviolence would be more consistent and better understood if we expressed, with equal boldness, a concern for the voiceless infants being killed by the thousands each day with legal impunity. Surely preborn children must be included when Mennonites speak out against violence and bloodshed if we are to be a credible Christian voice.
—*David H. Clymer, Shirleysburg, Pa.*

Burial is better than cremation

I am one of your regular readers in the Southern Hemisphere and want to thank you for the editorials, especially "Death in the New Year" (Jan. 6). I am 73 "already" and have been making my funeral plans each year since I lost my first wife, Barbara Snyder, and since I had open heart surgery back in 1999. The good Lord told me years ago I should help others prepare themselves for future life in heaven. So I prepare myself by showing the blessing that heaven will be for all God's children. What I did not like in the editorial is the acceptance of cremation. It appears to me the Bible's testimony of burying the dead is a better way of honoring the Lord in the last step of our earthly journey. Burial, rather than cremation, also distinguishes us from the pagans and their practices.

I also have been blessed by the Grace and Truth meditations that appear on page 2 provided by spiri-

IN THIS ISSUE

Baseball is not often used as a metaphor for the church in mission, but Tim Schrag (page 14) explains that the difference between a "superstar" congregation, and a so-so one, is "only one extra hit every two or three days." When opportunity knocks, the congregation that wishes to respond as a Good Samaritan will have a "default setting that is not stuck in a self-centered mode." Ginnie Horst Burkholder (page 12) describes herself as "the man left for dead by highway robbers in Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan," and she explains how she was helped toward healing by "people willing to sit with pain." But becoming a Good Samaritan congregation is not easy. James Lapp (page 8) describes the difficult transitions that will confront a congregation when it lets go of "harmony at all costs" as a guiding value and shifts from an inward focus to an outward focus. Each article describes what it means to be "missional." Meanwhile, a Mennonite Church USA release (page 21) reports how church members feel about using the word "missional" to describe the church.—*Editor* tual and faithful servants of the Lord: Gilberto Flores, Tammerie Spires, Clarence E. Rempel, Ron W. Adams and others. May God richly bless your staff and colaborers.—*Mario O. Snyder, Buenos Aires, Argentina*

Yoder quote is misleading

The article by Tripp York concerning the Christian celebration of Christmas ("Why Christmas?" Dec. 16, 2003) misleadingly quotes John Howard Yoder at the beginning of the article in such a way as to imply that Yoder approved of the "superficial" Christianity associated with popular celebrations of Christmas as better than no Christianity at all.

In the article from which that quote was drawn (Concern Pamphlet #16), Yoder is actually describing the standard mainstream view of Christmas rather than advocating that view. The full paragraph from Yoder reads, "For most churches most of the time, this history of 'Christianization' is to be welcomed as a success story. Better a superficial Christianity than none at all. Better a government saying, 'In God we trust,' and not meaning it than not even saying it. Better replace the Sun God by the Son of God than let the sun worship go on undiluted."

Unfortunately, the qualifying phrase, "For most churches most of the time," was deleted from the quote as it appeared in *The Mennonite*. Immediately following this paragraph in the Concern Pamphlet, Yoder goes on to sketch an alternative to that mainstream view.—*Gerald Biesecker-Mast, Bluffton, Ohio*

Need many models of salvation

Regarding J. Nelson Kraybill's article "Four Spiritual Truths of a Peacemaking God" (Nov. 4, 2003) and the subsequent Readers Say letters: It is not helpful to force a choice between Christus Victor and substitutionary atonement as mutually exclusive theories. In fact, they are not theories so much as models, with each emphasizing an aspect of the picture of Christ's saving work that needs to be filled in by the other model.

Christus Victor views humanity as a helpless victim under a hostile power. The substitutionary atonement model (which I would call the altar or blood sacrifice model) views mankind as a responsible lawbreaker under self-induced punishment. Both sides of the picture are accurate. Since Satan is not some neutral force but the Evil One, we fall under his power by our choice of sin. Christ is victor over that power by dealing with our sin which he does by paying its penalty in our place on the cross.

Other models, like Grotius' moral government model and Abelard's moral influence model, fill out the picture by underlining the universal claims of justice and the way Christ's life evokes our reaction. Any model is misleading if it is taken as the total picture.—*Monty Ledford, Aberdeen, Idaho*

Responding to the AIDS crisis

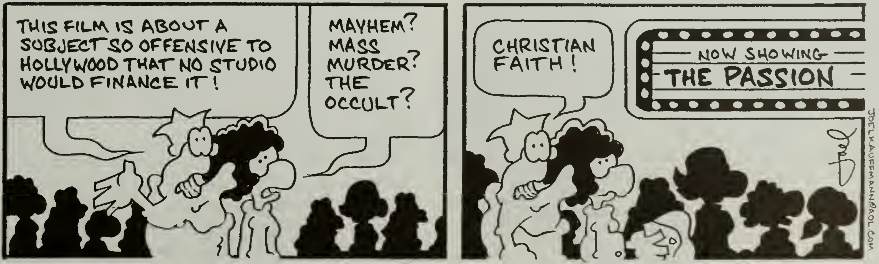
Recently my wife and I watched "Generations at Risk," a video produced by Mennonite Central Committee on AIDS in Africa. There is little doubt that illness and death in young people in Africa is a serious problem. These people seem to be trapped in a dreadful AIDS epidemic. Where can we find hope for them?

God gave his human creation marvelous intellectual gifts. For the AIDS problem in Africa we must use our gifts of critical thinking and the ability to evaluate evidence. Sober challenges to our standard understanding of AIDS are being made by many scientists and physicians who have little power to be heard. But being powerless does not lessen the validity of their thinking. They carefully lay out evidence that AIDS is not infectious or sexually communicable. They also show evidence that HIV is irrelevant to the diseases found in AIDS patients. In their view, the illnesses in Africa have other causes, but not HIV.

We need to listen to these scientific thinkers. From them we can begin to develop a vision of hope for ailing Africans, a hope based upon factual accuracy.—*Reed Burkholder, Boise, Idaho*

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. —*Editors*

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**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Mennonite pastor dies at 107, almost 108

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Bernard H. Janzen, who may have been the oldest retired Mennonite pastor, died Jan. 23, two days before his 108th birthday.

He served pastorates for 58 years, beginning in 1916 at Menno Mennonite Church, Watova, Okla., and ending in 1974 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Hydro, Okla.

Janzen also served congregations in Polk Station, Ore.; Shafter, Calif.; Turpin, Okla.; Kingman and Lehigh, Kan.; Cuauhtemoc, Mexico, and Madrid, Neb. He also was chaplain at Bethesda Nursing Home in Goessel, Kan. In all, his ministry service spanned more than 80 years.

He was born Jan. 25, 1896, to Henry W. and Mary Goertz Janzen in Newton, Kan. Besides his preaching and ministry, he worked as a farmer, carpenter, thresher, courier, crop insurance agent, store clerk and a cream and egg station operator.

He played the organ, piano and violin, though he had no formal education in music.

On June 3, 1917, he married Cathryn Janzen in Oklahoma. She died Aug. 10, 1974. On Oct. 1, 1976, he married Marie Regier Franz at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton. She died Dec. 12, 1994. Survivors include 11 grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.—*Mennonite Weekly Review*

Mennonite Central Committee photo by Bradley Fair

Eat, learn and smile

Full stomachs, bright notebooks and smiling faces are among the results of resources donated through Mennonite Central Committee to schools and children's organizations in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Since last April, 33,150 pounds of beef, turkey and pork canned by MCC has been shipped to Haiti. During that time, MCC also provided 2,775 school kits.

Rolando Santiago named MCC U.S. director

AKRON, Pa.—Rolando Santiago has been named the new executive director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. He will succeed José Oritz, who has served five years in the position and plans to retire this summer.

Rolando Santiago

A member of Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church, Santiago is a public health analyst for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration, an agency under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. He has a long history of using his administrative and educational skills to assist families struggling with poverty and injustice.

Born in Aibonito, Puerto Rico, and raised in a Mennonite family there, Santiago graduated from Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Va., then earned a doctorate in educational psychology and statistics from the University of Albany, N.Y.

Santiago will assume his new position in August.

Four conferences look to combine resources

ELKHART, Ind.—Leaders of four Mennonite Church USA conferences—Central District Conference, Illinois Conference, Indiana-Michigan Conference and Ohio Conference—unanimously agreed to recommend that their conferences combine resources in order to release and enhance the mission potential of their congregations.

The recommendation is the result of conversations held Jan. 29-30 at Hively Avenue Mennonite Church in Elkhart.

All four conferences will be invited to decide in principle for this combined approach, with details to be worked out later. The initiative calls for work with each congregation to encourage renewal and missional transformation. Leaders also hope to foster closer cooperation among congregations through the formation of mission districts, cells, partnerships and networks.

Whether this will result in one large conference or in several smaller ones will be determined as part of the reorganization process, once a decision to go forward has been confirmed.

Among the congregations the leaders hope to see improved quality of life, more authentic discipleship, growth in membership, growth in the number of congregations and an increase in diversity, both of people and of congregations.

Courtesy photo

Renovation against hunger

Kathy Howell of Corvallis (Ore.) Mennonite Fellowship and her children pose in front of a house being renovated by church and community members. Larry Passmore, a friend from her church, was involved with building a house in Salem, Ore., to benefit Mennonite Central Committee. He told Kathy, "If you buy a house that needs some repair, volunteers could do the work and the usual expenses for labor could be donated to MCC." They began work on the 480-square-foot cottage last fall and hope to complete the renovation in May.

Colombian Mennonite worker under threat

BOGOTÁ, Colombia—Colombian Mennonite church worker and peace advocate Ricardo Esquivia is facing false accusations and arrest. Colombian government authorities are reportedly building a case based on fabricated and false evidence to arrest Esquivia on the grounds of being a member of a guerrilla group.

In a Jan. 15 letter, Peter Stuckey, president of the Mennonite Church of Colombia, and Jenny Neme, interim co-director of Justapaz, called upon North American Mennonites to pray for Esquivia and contact government authorities from the United States, Canada and Colombia about the situation.

The letter says, in part, "We, as churches, have been working for human rights and peace through a variety of initiatives. … We attend victims of the violent conflict, train people of the churches, denounce abuses and give witness to a new society of justice and peace."

Esquivia has been director of Justapaz and is national coordinator of the Commission for Restoration, Life and Peace.

Last year, according to the letter, non-Roman Catholic churches in Colombia suffered the assassination of more than 40 pastors and church leaders.—*Susan Mark Landis, peace advocate for Mennonite Church USA*

Disabilities network board forms

GOSHEN, Ind.—Anabaptist Disabilities Network commissioned five people as the first ADNet Board of Directors in meetings held Jan. 16-17 at Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship in Goshen.

The meetings marked a transition that began in the fall of 2002, when family members of people with mental illness and other developmental, physical and mental disabilities began meeting to continue advocacy work that had earlier been carried out by Mennonite Mutual Aid and Mennonite Central Committee.

The new ADNet Board, which will be expanded in the coming year, includes members from Illinois, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Indiana. The board elected H. James Smith, Goshen, president; John Heyerly, Chenoa, Ill., is vice president; Ruth Detweiler, Akron, Pa., is secretary, and Milton Stoltzfus, Ephrata, Pa., is treasurer. David Gullman, Broadway, Va., is the fifth member of the board.

The new board plans to take its message to area conferences and other Anabaptist groups and to publish three issues of the *Dialogue* newsletter in 2004, plus a quarterly electronic resource for congregational leaders called "ADNotes."—*ADNet*

Coffee talk

Jointly sponsored by Mennonite Mission Network and the Dutch Mennonite Mission Board, Jackie Wyse spends several days each week hosting at Inloophuis de Ruimte, a drop-in center in her neighborhood.
—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Mennonite Mission Network photo

FROM mission

Our next big challenge

by James M. Lapp

Letting go of "harmony at all costs" as a guiding value and shifting from an inward to an outward focus inevitably creates unanticipated agenda for a church.

a current challenge for many congregations is all the talk about becoming a missional church. Some are weary of the word. Others express frustration when they search the dictionary and don't find it there.

However, the challenge of the missional church is far more profound than new semantic hassels. New conflicts and spiritual struggles are bound to arise, often reflected in concerns about the budget or music or the pastor's leadership style. While becoming missional stimulates creative energy and fresh focus in a congregation, it also makes us prey to a whole new set of tensions. Letting go of "harmony at all costs" as a guiding value and shifting from an inward to an outward focus inevitably creates unanticipated agenda for a church.

We are learning that making a commitment to the Great Commission of Jesus is only the beginning of a long process that will demand the best from us for years to come. Here are six transitions that the move from mission to missional present us.

1. From mission as a fad to mission as the eternal purposes of God

Historians describe certain periods when mission activity was especially strong. For North American Mennonites this came with our first overseas missionaries going to India in 1899. Then followed waves of mission activity overseas and in the cities of our nation. Over the years mission interest has waxed and waned, with special efforts to motivate people for mission during certain periods of time.

- Being a missional church seeks to shift the emphasis from fad to the eternal purposes of God.
- We hear this call to mission presented to Abraham and Sarah to go forth to a new land with the promise that through them all families of the earth will be blessed (Genesis 12:3).
- We hear this prophetic word from the prophet Isaiah: "It is

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too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach the end of the earth" (49:6). It is not enough to take care of our own. We are called to serve the nations around us.

- Even when Israel was in captivity, Jeremiah instructed, "But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf" (29:7).
- The New Testament themes of God's call to be a missional people are even more pervasive.
- Jesus declares, "You are the salt of the earth" and, "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5).
- Jesus' final pronouncement to the disciples is, "And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).
- Or Paul's word in 2 Corinthians: "So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (5:20).
- The Bible concludes with the grand picture of God's ultimate intentions that people from every tribe, tongue and nation be included among the worshippers that gather around the throne of God (Revelation 7:9).

The purposes of the church are none other than the purposes of God: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). As one theologian wrote, "Mission is to the church like fire is to burning." We have no purpose as a church other than to be missional. This is our identity and calling.

2. From a mission department to becoming mission-minded churches

To engage in missions, the typical congregation appoints a mission committee or designates an outreach commission. This faithful group tries to provide opportunities for the congregation "to reach the community," engage in mission activities beyond themselves, or perhaps assist church plants somewhere at home or abroad. All this is good, but it remains departmental.

What if the purposes of God permeated every committee and aspect of the congregation and were not relegated to a few people with convictions about sharing the gospel with the lost? The missional church has mission at its core. Canadian missiologist Jack Suderman writes that in the missional church:

- The Sunday school teachers understand they are training people to be disciples of Jesus and to continue the ministry of Jesus in the world.
- The finance committee thinks missionally about money, how the budget reflects the mission of the church and how stewardship of the gospel forms the basis of giving.
- The ushers understand the missional importance of welcoming people into the congregation.
- The worship leaders and those responsible for music understand the missional significance of how they plan and lead the gathered life of the congregation from Sunday to Sunday.
- The church council, elders, men's and women's leaders, youth leaders and custodians all become oriented around the missional implications of their ministries.

In our conferences, is mission relegated to some commission or board? How much does it show up on the agenda of the executive committee, in staff discussions, among the conference ministers?

3. From winning the lost to making disciples of Jesus

The immediate image of being missional is evangelism. To be sure it includes sharing the gospel. But too often we have a truncated view of evangelism as saving souls apart from disciple-making, peacemaking and caring for the brokenness of the world. The Great Commission presents a holistic view of mission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Millions of people have been baptized but have not been taught to be disciples. One African

Continued on page 10

writer in commenting on the phenomenal growth of the church in that continent observes, "The church in Africa is one mile long, but only one inch deep." The same can be said of much of the church in North America. British churchman John R.W. Stott speaks of the "strange and disturbing paradox" of enormous statistical growth in the church without corresponding growth in discipleship.

Being missional expands the interests of the church to a wide range of discipleship concerns that are part of being faithful to the purposes of God. It is not enough to plant new churches and receive new members. We also must walk with people in concrete steps of growth.

4. From the traditional family to the community of Jesus

Family holds a special place in our lives. Never mind that we see an overall decline in the quality of family relationships in our church and society. Are we in touch with how exclusive family can be? Families have gatherings to which strangers are not invited. Families have their own way of doing things and tell inside jokes. They enjoy unique foods and have their own rules for behavior. Guests may be invited into the family, but it is clear who is guest and who is family.

When we apply this metaphor to the congregation, is everyone included, or are some only guests? Too often certain people feel excluded due to their history, family name, singleness, race or status and do not feel at home among us.

> **We will only be a sign of the kingdom of God and a foretaste of heaven—and truly missional—when we move beyond biological images of family to the new community of Jesus.**

Missional churches move beyond family to the new community of Christ, where there is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, member or guest, young or old, married or single, insider or outsider, and all are one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28) This may be a distinctive contribution Mennonites can make to the missional church —the incarnation of Christ in visible expressions of genuine community shaped by the Spirit of God. We will only be a sign of the kingdom of God and a foretaste of heaven—and truly missional—when we move beyond biological images of family to the new community of Jesus.

5. From pastors doing ministry to equipping others for ministry

In too many congregations the neglected part of the pastor's role is the equipment of others for ministry. Paul instructs the Ephesians, "The gifts [Christ] gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry" (4:11-12).

Will congregations allow the pastor to equip members for ministry? Will members be willing to be equipped? Will members be willing to receive ministry from others in the church besides the pastor so that the pastor is free to do equipping? Will pastors feel validated in their ministry if they give priority to training others for ministry and do not do all the ministry themselves?

When pastors cease to be only shepherds who care for the flock but become leaders who articulate vision and direction and invest their energies in equipping, coaching and guiding the congregation in addressing tough decisions, it presents a new challenge to a congregation. I know only a few churches that have taken this challenge seriously.

Will Mennonite Church USA and its schools prepare pastors capable of this missional leadership? Are conference leaders giving priority to equipping? In the missional church, all leaders in congregations, conferences and the denomination will be committed to releasing gifts and empowering others for ministry in the church and in the world.

6. From a sending church to a sent church

What if instead of congregations sending people to do mission and service elsewhere it functioned as a sent community, as if the whole church were on God's mission in the world?

A sending church sends a few and allows most people to remain contentedly at home. A sent church puts everyone on notice that they are called of God to be about the unfinished ministry of reconciliation in the world.

A sending church pays representatives to minister on their behalf. A sent church calls each member to be involved in mission and views all its activities through the lens of mission.

A sending church often sees the needs somewhere—typically overseas, in our urban centers, among the poor or disadvantaged or anywhere but the housing development next door. The sent church sees mission across the street and

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around the world, in the neighborhood, through one's occupation or wherever Christians find themselves.

A sending church tends to be motivated by stories of unusual and graphic need or reports of exceptional success by missionaries. A sent church ministers out of an inner call and commitment to the mission entrusted to God's people.

Are we a sending church or a sent church, a church that shares a few of its people for a limited period of time or a church that holds mission at its center and views all it does for all its members through the window of mission?

Methodist leader and writer William Willimon writes about his first pastorate in rural Georgia. He was fresh out of seminary and wanted to be a good pastor. On his first visit to the church he found the door padlocked by the sheriff following a fight among the members. He says, "I tried everything in that church, … but the response was always disappointing. The arguments, the pettiness, the fights in the parking lot after the board meeting were more than I could take." It was tough, and after one year he was glad to leave.

Some years later he met the young man who was then pastor of that congregation. He was young and idealistic. The young pastor informed Willimon that the people out there still remember him. "Yeah," Willimon said glumly, "I'll never forget them either."

Then this young pastor reported on what was happening in this church. "Their ministry to the community has been a wonder," he said. "That little church is now supporting … more than a dozen of the troubled families around the church. The free day-care center is going great. Not too many interracial congregations in this part of the world," he observed. "What a great place for my first church."

Willimon couldn't believe what this young pastor was telling him. He asked what had happened. The young pastor said, "I don't know. One Sunday things just sort of came together. It wasn't anything in particular. It's just that when the service was finished and we were on the way out, we knew that Jesus loved us and had plans for us. Things pretty much took off after that."

Willimon writes, "I tell you what I think happened. I think that church got intruded upon. Someone greater than I knocked the lock off [the door], kicked it open and offered them peace, the Holy Spirit and forgiveness. And now they are called church."

Although the structures of Mennonite Church USA are largely in place, the process of transformation is not complete. The harder transformation awaits: becoming missional in every part of the church.

That church discovered what it means to be missional—not in safe, passive ways but in active cooperation with the Spirit of God. Not a new program or technique, not the latest fad or clever gimmick, not a slick new mission department or crackerjack pastor but a life change from within. What had been a contentious church became the missional body of Christ. An inward orientation was transformed to an outward focus. Concern for survival surrendered to the high calling of being God's reconciling presence in the world.

Distractions—and that is what consumes a lot of our time—fall to the side. We discover new courage, unity, hope, purpose and joy.

Although the structures of Mennonite Church USA are largely in place, the process of transformation is not complete. The harder transformation awaits: becoming missional in every part of the church. I can think of no better way to sum it all up than in the familiar 38 vision words that have guided us in recent years: "God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world."

James M. Lapp is conference pastor for Franconia Conference. This article is adapted from a sermon he gave at the Consituency Leaders Council last October in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Lessons from the Good Samaritan on being a missional church

by Ginnie Horst Burkholder

I am on a journey of healing. I have been through intense emotional pain after experiencing losses that triggered confusion, tears, fear, panic and anger, but I am healing. I and the man left for dead by highway robbers in Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) have some things in common.

He was assaulted, lost his clothes, belongings, dignity and sense of safety and lay dying. He needed his wounds attended to, his trust restored and someone not afraid to be with him in his pain, someone who could carry him in it.

In 1995 I was reeling from doctor's visits, tests, strange diagnoses, medications and treatments, all for my 50-year-old husband of 29 years. Then came a diagnosis: dementia with Lewy body disease. Prognosis: progressive. Cure: none. I was numb. I had lost my anchor, bearings, safety and trust. I could not sing "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." I could only weep. I was dying inside.

I remember when I did not know what to do with another's pain. It made me uncomfortable, so I kept at a distance.

The world is full of people like us, who have been robbed by their perceptions, beliefs and circumstances of their sense of safety and trust and need the healing presence of a Good Samaritan who is not put off by pain. But we in the church, like the rest of our culture, want to avoid pain. We want quick fixes. We do not want to acknowledge our own hurt and are therefore ill-equipped to deal with others' hurt.

Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan is preceded by the instruction to "love your neighbor as yourself." We need to hear about loving ourselves. We need others to hold up mirrors to who we are, to ferret out the false beliefs that keep us rooted in fear, doubt, self dislike and anger. We need to confess the truth of who we are and experience the awesome gift of God's unconditional love. I am jealous, spiteful, fearful, judgmental, addicted and self-righteous, but God loves me and can change me.

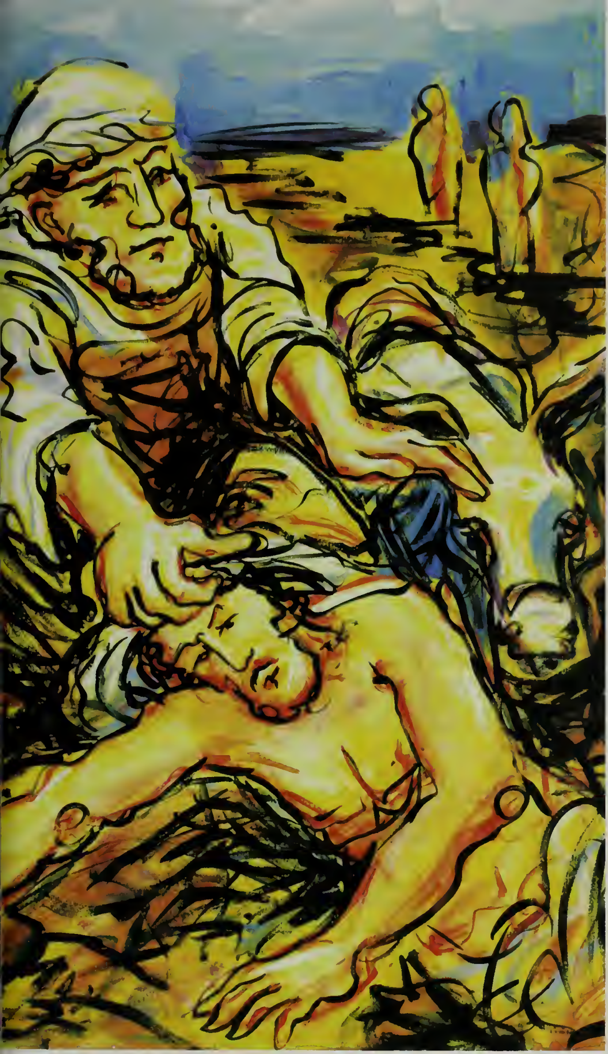
Often we have tucked away all the things that may expose us as less than perfect. We wear a mask of having it all together. Without dealing with the pain of our needs we are in no condition to help others. The church needs an army of leaders who have so waded through their own fears and can help others wade through theirs. We need leaders who call us to examine the beliefs that keep us walled off from those who love us. We need safe places to share our vulnerability and find healing in community.

My journey into emotional healing could not have happened if God had not provided people able to sit with pain. These people had faced their own pain. Arms of acceptance carried this wounded traveler on a long, bumpy journey to a place where I could begin to heal. They had acknowledged their own wounds, named them, grieved them and now knew how to sit with mine. They knew when to bandage with hugs, when to pour oil of encouragement and when to watch from a distance, leaving me in the hands of the Caretaker of the inn where I took up residence and found new perceptions of God's constant vigilance and attendance to my needs. They knew because they had once lay dying along a lonely road.

I remember when I did not know what to do with another's pain. It made me uncomfortable, so I kept at a distance. Unable to face my own pain, I avoided others'.

Here are some questions to ask if you want to test your tolerance to your own or another's pain:

- Do I pass by with humor to deflect the pain? I imagine one of the travelers in Jesus' story saying, "You certainly know how to be at the wrong place at the wrong time." Humor says I am not comfortable with your pain and I will make light of the circumstances. But when the laughter dies the pain is still there, and a sense of being alone has been added to the wound.
- Do I pass by on the other side of my own or another's pain because I grew up believing only the weak show pain or emotion? This is false and destructive. It discredits our creation in the image of a passionate God, denies the fallen human experience and shackles the sanctification process that God has ordained through the Holy Spirit. This belief keeps us from being with another's pain and separates those in pain from those who could reach out in support. It fills churches with people keeping up appearances.



We are to be a church that faces our own pain and helps others find healing as well.

- Do I believe that to acknowledge another's pain means I must fix it? In befriending our pain we discover that what we really need is an accepting, containing presence. Containment surrounds the pain without taking it on, validates the hurt without having to fix it, welcomes the unanswerable questions without having to have answers and gives reassurance that we are loved through all the irrational fears. Containment is what my mother gave when she held me, let me cry and did nothing else because at 90 years old she could do nothing more.

- Do I shut down pain by spiritualizing it? "God won't give you any more than you can bear" is little comfort when your world is upside down and you believe you will never be happy again. It says, Have faith and everything will be OK. But my faith does not take away my husband's debilitating disease and our changing roles. It will not take away the loss and pain I need to grieve in order to die to dreams. Grieving is dying, and dying precedes resurrection. When we shut down grieving our own or another's pain, we unwittingly abort the ressurection of new life the Spirit has for us.

- Do I invalidate pain by focusing on "it could be worse"? A common strategy is to focus on something much worse so that my pain seems small. This says, Don't grieve this loss. It shuttles the pain underground, where it sucks the joy out of the present and the hope out of the future.

When the church becomes a refuge for pain and we no longer send people quietly out into the secular world for emotional healing, we will have become a church equipped for effective mission.

The Samaritan, despised by the Jews, knew the pain of rejection. He had been tempered by his adversity and had discovered that our own fears and beliefs hurt us far worse than anything outsiders say or believe. He had spent enough time in his pain to heal the pain of rejection and resurrect the truth that he could love himself and be the person who loved others regardless of messages to the contrary. That may have been his most courageous act, for it is not in our nature to walk into the pain that refines and heals us.

Mario Rivera, founder of Theotherapy Seminars Inc., which helps people confront their pain, says, "The greatest prayer you can pray is, 'Lord, reveal myself to myself.'" When we acknowledge ourselves in the light of God's truth, we begin to heal.

I have come a long way, and I have a long journey ahead, but I am less afraid than I was yesterday. These days, singing "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" elicits more thoughts about what God has done in my life than what was not prevented. I sing with hope and promise. Samaritans carry me. God is healing me. When the church becomes a refuge for pain and we no longer send people quietly out into the secular world for emotional healing, we will have become a church equipped for effective mission.

Ginnie Horst Burkholder is a member of First Mennonite Church, Canton, Ohio.

Becoming a neighbor

It can be messy, costly and tiring. But that's love.

by Tim Schrag

I interviewed congregational members and discovered that most of us don't know many people on our streets. This raises questions about the meaning of neighbor. If a person lives 50 yards from me but I don't know her name, is she my neighbor?

A religious expert came to Jesus and asked, "And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29). We know he was focused on himself, because the text says, He sought "to justify himself."

At the end of his parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus asks, "Who was a neighbor to the man who was robbed?" In other words, Who became a neighbor to the man?

Becoming a neighbor is personal and hands-on. The religious expert sought the safety of a discussion about the meaning of neighbor. The impersonal answer could have been geography (those within a quarter mile) or sociology (the poor, the lonely). Jesus tells the story of a particular man, a person you can touch. He was bleeding, naked, half dead, abandoned, in the middle of a particular road on a particular day. You can't depersonalize this. Either you get involved or you aren't a neighbor.

Jesus tells the story of a particular man, a person you can touch. He was bleeding, naked, half dead, abandoned, in the middle of a particular road on a particular day. You can't depersonalize this. Either you get involved or you aren't a neighbor.

These days the word neighbor is more sanitized. It is neighborly to mow your lawn, keep up your property, keep your dog from barking. Good neighbors are polite, civil.

But Jesus went to another level: touching the man, tending to him, following through, staying involved. Becoming a neighbor is about personal involvement.

Let's assume that in our high-school buildings are lonely students. How do you become a neighbor to them? One approach is to be friendly. But the way one counteracts loneliness is not just being friendly but befriending specific people.

When we moved here it was hard for our oldest son Ben to begin school in a new place as a sophomore. Students were friendly, but Dan Brown of this congregation especially befriended him. The phone rang at our house, and I said to Ben words that made a huge difference. "It's for you."

That's what happened to the man robbed on the road. He opened his dazed eyes at some point, and there was another human who was being a neighbor to him. "Are you OK?" "Can I help you?"

Adopting this mentality is a challenge. I'm concerned about the poor, the lonely, gangs, dysfunctional families. But I get stuck. I don't know these people or how to get to know them. The result is a low-level guilt and anxiety and little change.

In Jesus' story, the first travelers on the road did not lose momentum. They were going to Jerusalem or Jericho. Just a tiny detour and they could keep on schedule, make their appointment, keep their life from complications.

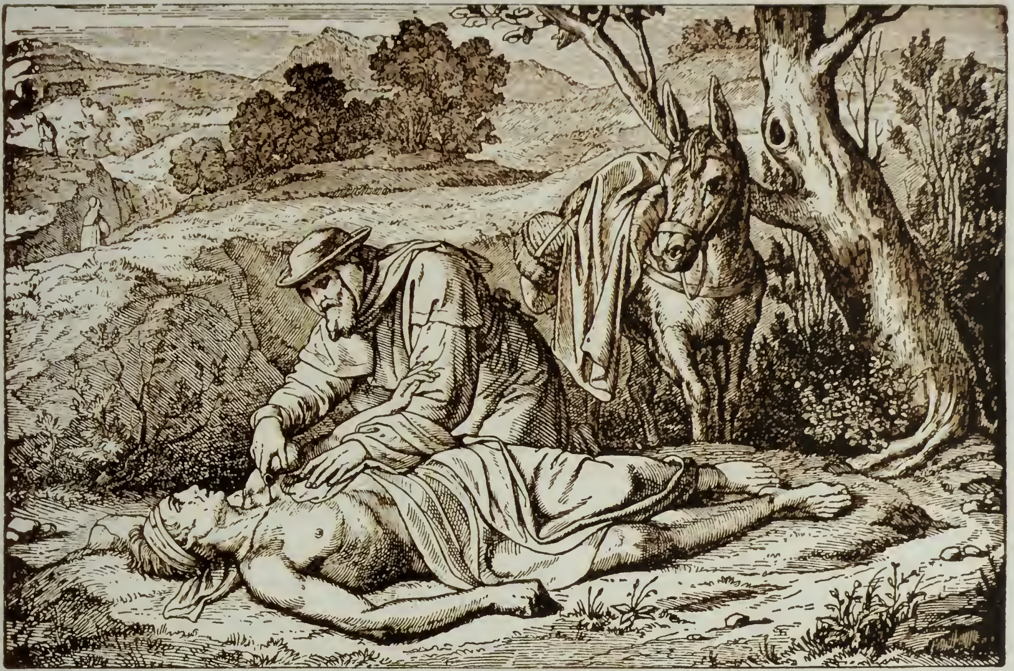
But the Samaritan stopped, disrupted his life. His decision affected his travel plans, cash flow and who knows how many other things. He even committed himself to further disruption: "I'll be back and pay you even more."

Jesus seems to say, You can't simply think or talk your way into becoming different. You have to act. Will you befriend or be friendly? Will you stop or keep going? And can you live with the disruption, discomfort, uncertainty and ambiguity? Becoming a neighbor can be messy, costly and tiring. It was for the Samaritan. But that's love.

One day I received a call here at the church from a social worker who said a woman was in her office needing $25. The money was critical at that exact moment. I said I'd come over. I arrived downtown and gave the money, not realizing the woman needing it was still sitting there. I said hello, and she thanked me profusely. I said, You're welcome, happy to help, then left.

I wish I had stopped, perhaps asked if she would mind if I checked back in a week or so to see how things were going for her. That's all. I was friendly, neighborly, but I missed a chance to become a neighbor.

At least now I recognize how I blew it. God's



Brown Brothers

Word is working its way into my thinking.

Two side notes about personal involvement. First, this is not disruption without boundaries. We still have to "love ourselves," take care of ourselves. Total depletion of oneself is a sure path to depressed burnout. The Samaritan found good resources for the injured man (the innkeeper), then said he'd check back. He loved himself as well as becoming a neighbor.

Second, in baseball the difference between a superstar and a so-so player is only one extra hit every two or three days. Opportunities to become a neighbor may only happen now and then, but even small changes are powerful. Keep this in mind in the routines of work, shopping and friendships.

How can we become a neighborly congregation? The short answer is, I don't know. The Samaritan had no way of anticipating finding a robbery victim that day. He had not prepared a plan but had developed an alert, receptive and flexible mindset. When opportunity knocked, his default setting was not stuck in a self-centered mode.

Alert, flexible, receptive, loving. Does this describe us? Yes.

Certainly the pull is constant to pass by, stay comfortable. Yet God's Spirit is working on us as we resist this pull and are attracted instead to adventure, choosing loving disruption.

The invitation to send some members to the other side of the world didn't fall on deaf ears. We didn't just comfortably send funds but accepted a loving disruption in our lives.

Apple picking became a mission project, as bags of apples went not just to food pantries but to families in Headstart and to the workers as well.

An extra base hit here and there, and the batting average toward befriending and neighborliness rises. What most encourages me is the way imagination keeps coming alive: What about? How about if? Wouldn't it be neat?

Jesus seems to say, You can't simply think or talk your way into becoming different. You have to act.

Where is this heading? I don't know. I do know it is about following. That's the nature of adventure—not knowing for sure but excited about discovery. And that is the nature of faith—going to "a land I will show you."

It is encouraging and exciting to be a pastor in a congregation willing to dream and risk and trust. May God's vision be our vision and the loving Spirit of Jesus be our spirit as well.

Tim Schrag is pastor of Mennonite Church of Normal, Ill. This article is adapted from a sermon he gave last fall.

The rest of the st

by Kathleen Kern

CPT Iraq photo

The story was eight days old by the time the Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) workers in Iraq heard it. Sa'ad Al Khashab, an attorney working for the Organization for Human Rights in Iraq, took them to visit Al Jazeera village, near the city of ar-Ramadi on Nov. 30, 2003. Witnesses told them that on the night of Nov. 22, Ibrahim Ahmed Auda, his brother Sabah Auda and a guest, Mohammad Nawah, approached Ibrahim's house, which was surrounded by U.S. troops. Soldiers put the three men in handcuffs and sat them on the ground. The squadron then split up and entered the house from two sides. In the dark, members of one group mistook the other for the enemy, opened fire and ended up killing four of their own. Distraught, the soldiers came out of the house and executed the brothers and their friend. Helicopters and tanks then destroyed the house with missile fire.

Two weeks later, as the team in Iraq was investigating this incident in Al Jazeera, they found out the story had not ended there. On the same night, five young men had finished prayers at a mosque about 500 meters from the home where the military operation that killed the four soldiers and three Iraqis had just ended. They got into their pickup and headed away from the operation. **A U.S. tank from a neighboring house opened fire on the pickup**, killing all five passengers.

When neighbors and family members returned from the hospital with the bodies and death certificates, a military convoy of five tanks met them. The soldiers ordered them to halt, took photos, then apologized. Locals thought the convoy was part of the same unit that had carried out the operation.

Last Dec. 28, the Organization for Human Rights in Iraq held a press conference to report the killings in Al Jazeera. Several Arabic news agencies attended, as did Associated Press Television News (APTN), but the story on this (U.S.) side of the ocean has yet to create a ripple. I have spent hours doing searches on the Internet for some mention of it (complicated by the fact that entering "Al Jazeera" invariably brings up the Arabic satellite news service instead of the village where the killings occurred). I even went to a Web site that lists chronologically the American soldiers who have died in Iraq since the United States invaded, and found nothing about four soldiers dying near Al Jazeera or ar-Ramadi on Nov. 22.

CPTers have followed up on the Al Jazeera incidents and other stories of U.S. soldiers abusing their power with various officers in the Coalition Forces. These officers usually attempt to discredit the team's Iraqi sources. When the team attempted to talk to one colonel about U.S. troops stealing money, jewelry and other property from Iraqi families during raids, he told them: "The U.S. forces say no property was confiscated. I would trust an American soldier 10 times more than any Iraqi."

Despite the official denials and lack of information on the Internet, I believe the accounts of what happened at Al Jazeera are probably true. (The mainstream media has not reported most of the realities I have witnessed working with CPT in Haiti, the West Bank and Colombia.) I generally trust my co-workers in CPT to report what they witness and hear as reliably as they can (although I also know from my experiences working in the field how difficult it can be at times to separate fact from rumor.)

The other reason I believe the incident at Al Jazeera happened has to do with history. Vietnamese and international organizations had reported hundreds of military atrocities inflicted on Vietnamese civilians before the My Lai massacre happened in 1968. These atrocities did not hit the mainstream American media until many years after they occurred.

For example, an elite unit of the 101st Airborne Division called the Tiger Force went on a seven-month killing spree in 1967 during which American soldiers slaughtered and dismembered hundreds of Vietnamese villagers. Dennis Stout, a military journalist assigned to cover the battalion, watched the Tiger Force and other units from the 101st Airborne commit mass executions of civilians, including numerous women and children. A master sergeant and military chaplain both told him to keep quiet. After watching the rape and execution of a woman by 22 men in another unit, **he made what he called a "moral cop-out." He would try to stay alive so that someday he could tell people what happened**. When he received an honorable discharge in 1969, he made a formal complaint to Army officials, who promised to investigate.

The Army closed its investigation of the Tiger Force atrocities in 1975, allowing the soldiers who committed the most vicious abuses to resign quietly. Stout sent letters to the Pentagon, asking for information about the investigation, and received no response. In December 1996, he wrote to his

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Reporting what peacemakers see, hear and experience is a part of Christian ministry.

congressman, Matt Salmon, for help. Army officials informed Mr. Salmon's office on Feb. 12, 1997, that they could not locate the records. The deadly rampages of the Tiger Force would never have made the news if someone had not tipped off a reporter at the *Toledo Blade*, which published a series of articles about the unit entitled "Buried Secrets, Brutal Truths" in 2003.

The massacre at My Lai itself did not become public knowledge until nearly a year after Charlie Company of the 11th Brigade killed about 500 men, women and children. And before My Lai, there was No Gun Ri in Korea, where the U.S. Seventh Calvary (General George Custer's old regiment) slaughtered hundreds of unarmed villagers in July 1950. That story did not break until 1999. Before No Gun Ri, there was the war against the Philippines at the beginning of the 20th century in which U.S. soldiers slaughtered hundreds of thousands of Filipinos. Atrocities committed by the U.S. military go back to the founding of the republic.

Today the media tell us about U.S. soldiers dying in attacks by Iraqi insurgents. We hear that Iraqis are cranky because they do not have electricity and jobs. **We do not hear about the midnight raids that terrorize families, about coalition forces taking men and boys from homes** that soldiers have admitted they raided by mistake, or the daily humiliation Iraqis undergo when soldiers bark at them in a language they do not understand. We do not see soldiers responding without sympathy to relatives desperate to know the condition and whereabouts of men soldiers have taken away and imprisoned for months without charges. We do not see the grim prison conditions these detainees have to live under or the physical and mental torture U.S. soldiers have inflicted on them.

Most soldiers are not savages. Many of those in Iraq have been moved by the suffering of Iraqi civilians and have become disenchanted when they find their orders do not serve the noble purposes for which they thought they were fighting. Yet history teaches us that when wars and military occupations happen, atrocities follow. Sometimes they are committed by men enraged and grief-stricken by the death of their comrades; sometimes they are committed by those whom the military has trained to believe that their enemies are less than human.

In situations such as these, the job of Christian peacemakers is to listen to victims talk about their trauma. This is a true ministry because **the belief that anguish has fallen on deaf or uncaring ears is a taproot of violence**. Reporting what peacemakers see, hear and experience is also a part of Christian ministry. When the mainstream media ignored the atrocities happening in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua, Christian missionaries and aid and development workers informed their constituencies what was happening in those countries. (The ardently secular Noam Chomsky has often mentioned that he relied more on reports from church workers in Central America for news of the region than he did on the *New York Times*.)

Getting the story out does not mean becoming a news service. It means bearing witness to the truth in whatever context Christians find themselves. The first Anabaptists did it by collecting stories for *The Mirror of the Martyrs*. Bartolomé de las Casas did it when he reported on the genocide of indigenous people in the new world. And the first Christians did it when they described Jesus' death by slow torture at the hands of the Romans, whose military was occupying Palestine at the time.

Matthew 25:40 has Jesus as saying, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." We are honoring Christ, victim of the Great Atrocity, when we refuse to allow powers and principalities to suppress news about the brutalization and slaughter of people the world considers disposable.

Kathleen Kern is a long-term worker for Christian Peacemaker Teams.

Another Day in Paradise: International Humanitarian Workers Tell Their Stories, compiled and edited by Carol Bergman (Orbis Books, 2003, $25) brings news from a source rarely heard in our media: humanitarian workers. Each of the 15 chapters offers reflections in their own words of workers in various places of need around the world. Divided into three parts: "Natural Disasters," "War" and "Fragile Peace," the book breathes with the delicate combination of fatigue and hope that these remarkable people bring to their work. In his preface, John le Carré calls them "unedited, unbought eyewitnesses to our collective folly." Their reports from a world most of us never touch and rarely hear about, are honest and eye-opening.—*Gordon Houser*

Another Day in Paradise

Lost voices in worship

Marlene Kropf is director of the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board Office of Congregational Life.

From the rear of the sanctuary a powerful voice caught us by surprise: "I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies." After a long pause, the voice thundered, "Take away from me the noise of your songs!"

Complete silence followed. Hardly anyone breathed. Then the reader continued, "But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream."

Though I've read Amos 5:21-24 many times, I had never before heard such profound disappointment and fierce anger in God's voice as I did that Sunday morning. When the text was allowed to be proclaimed with prophetic passion, it was as though we heard an utterly new voice in worship.

Later I wondered what other voices may be rarely admitted into Mennonite worship.

Prophetic speech. Many congregations have avoided the prophetic voice in worship. Perhaps in an attempt to undo some of the damage caused by insensitive or manipulative preaching in the past, our churches have emphasized a comforting message. And while God's first word to us is always, "You are my beloved children; with you I am well pleased," there are times and seasons when we need to hear the word of judgment as well.

Distress and lament. The children of Israel could throw themselves on God's altar and cry out,

"How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
Consider and answer me, O Lord my God!
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death" (Psalm 13:1,3).

We are far more restrained. On a Sunday morning in my congregation we received the devastating news of a life-threatening injury suffered by one of our leaders, and we paused to pray quietly. What I really wanted to do was to shout at God: "Where were you when our brother fell? How can you abandon us in such a needy time?"

Joyful praise. At the other end of the spectrum, many of us struggle to give voice to ecstatic praise. On Easter morning our sanctuaries reverberate with joyful songs and profound alleluias. Yet on most of the rest of the Sundays of the year, our praise may be more tepid. Congregations that live close to the edge of poverty—whether here or abroad—often enter abundantly into joyful worship.

Aesthetic pleasure. While it's true we make beautiful music, we're much less comfortable with poetry or artful language. We're suspicious of anything but the plainest speech. That God might be pleased with an exquisite line of poetry, a sparkling image or a skillfully turned phrase seems less apparent. Walter Brueggemann makes a case for public prayers being "well-said," not to call attention to the artistry but "to mobilize and sustain the attention of the praying community." He says, "Such prayer must be porous, in order to allow the words uttered to be access points for other members of the praying assembly who may take these utterances as their utterances" (*Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth: Prayers of Walter Brueggemann*, edited by Edwin Searcy, Fortress Press, 2003). If we think beauty is merely decorative, then our hesitation may be well-founded. But if beauty is a language for the ineffable, creating space for deeper encounter with mystery, then it surely belongs in worship of the most high God.

Compelling emotion. Another voice we've shied away from in worship is passion. Many Mennonites (myself included) are reluctant to speak of the depth of our affection for God or our attachment to Christ. Afraid of sounding gushy or unreal, we leave our deepest love unexpressed. Perhaps we could learn from the simple ardor of Hafiz, a 14th-century Persian poet:

We are
like lutes
once held by God.
Being away from his warm body
fully explains
this
constant
yearning.

Humble honesty. The voice most needed in our worship is truth. Words that name our glory and our shame sometimes seem in short supply. On Ash Wednesday, the church around the world gathers to speak the truth of our mortality, the truth that one day we will all return to the dust of the earth. As we enter the season of Lent and embark on the journey to the cross, we are called to admit this voice into our worship, to face our finitude and follow our Savior to suffering and death. Like all honest language, however, the truth of Ash Wednesday makes space for light to shine in. And so, in freedom and joy, we will come at last to Easter, to resurrection and new life. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Living Lent in a Fat Tuesday world**—Alan Kauffman
- **Arrested transformation**—Dave Boshart

Mission agencies seek place in new era

Churches around the world see North America as 'global mission frontier.'

A new era has begun in Mennonite mission work, and North Americans are trying to figure out how they fit into it. Churches around the world that once received missionaries now are sending them. International relationships of equality are emerging, creating a desire for cooperation and ending the exclusive leadership of North Americans.

Seeking to adapt to these changes, leaders of North American Mennonite mission agencies made plans Jan. 30-31 to form a regional mission fellowship that will take its place alongside similar bodies being formed in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America.

Each region is a subgroup of Global Mission Fellowship, created last August at Mennonite World Conference assembly in Zimbabwe. About 50 conferences and agencies around the world have joined GMF, whose purpose is to strengthen international cooperation in mission work.

North America already has an inter-Mennonite mission forum, the Council of International Anabaptist Ministries. But the members of CIM, whose annual meeting in Chicago drew about 70 participants, decided the North American part of GMF needed a fresh start.

So they appointed Janet Plenert, executive director of international ministries for Mennonite Church Canada Witness, to lead the formation of a North American regional mission fellowship.

"I thank God for God's moving among us," Plenert said after accepting the assignment. "I'm both grateful and overwhelmed by the task ahead."

Plenert said creating a regional fellowship might help people see mission work in a new way.

"It breaks down the image we've always had that mission happens only out there," she said. "It challenges us to see North America as one of the global mission frontiers."

At the meeting of representatives from 20 agencies, conferences and institutions, the mission leaders often spoke of the changes brought by the globalization of mission work.

"We [North Americans] have seen ourselves as central to the global Christian mission movement," said Richard Showalter, president of Eastern Mennonite Missions. "That day, however, is over. We are, in many respects, running to catch up."

What North Americans are catching up to is a growing web of mission efforts crisscrossing the globe.

"I feel uncomfortable now sitting in an area committee [of CIM] and deciding how missions in Africa should be done," said Harold Ens, general director of MBMS International, the Mennonite Brethren mission agency. "Because I know the Brazilians are sending missionaries to Africa, too."

Paul Schrag for Meetinghouse

Janet Plenert of Mennonite Church Canada Witness listens as Javier Soler of the Amor Viviente Church in Honduras speaks during the Council of International Anabaptist Ministries meeting. Plenert has been assigned to lead the formation of a North American regional mission fellowship in the new Global Mission Fellowship.

Ens also cited the examples of German Mennonites doing mission work in Brazil and Paraguay, Colombians evangelizing in Peru, Mexico and Panama, and Japanese in Thailand.

"We're in a totally different world in terms of international mission," he said. "It's very complex."

North America, too, is an international mission field. Indonesian and Honduran Mennonites have planted churches in North America.

Representing the Honduran church at the CIM meeting was Javier Soler, who chairs the GMF planning committee. Soler is president of Amor Viviente, or Living Love, a group of churches in Honduras that grew out of work by Eastern Mennonite Missions, the Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference mission agency.

Amor Viviente, founded in 1974, planted a church in New Orleans in 1983 and now has 12 established congregations in North America and two more in formation.

Leaders at the CIM meeting said they were taking just the first steps toward greater changes to come. A regional mission fellowship in North America might eventually replace CIM, Plenert said.

"For us in North America, the challenge is how to partner effectively with the evangelistic vision … in churches around the world," said Len Barkman, of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference."—*Paul Schrag for Meetinghouse*

Funding crunch, weak 'brand identity'

Mennonite Church USA Executive Board decides to rework firstfruits system.

A funding system that confuses donors and weak "brand identity" for the Mennonite Church USA denomination were issues confronting members of Mennonite Church USA Executive Board when it met at Portland (Ore.) Mennonite Church Jan. 29-31.

"There's a sense in the church that people are waiting for something to happen," said Barth Hague as he introduced the results of a massive survey that "audited" the way congregational members perceive the new denomination. Hague and James Nofziger, both administrators at MMA Stewardship Agency in Goshen, Ind., collected 1,137 questionnaires from a scientifically-selected random sample of church members in the United States and interviewed pastors in four regions of the country.

One persistent problem revealed by the communications audit, Hague said, relates to use of the word "missional." The word is being used by more and more leaders to describe how the new denomination should be characterized (see related story on page 21).

"Pastors buy into the notion of 'missional' and agree it is the right vision," said Hague, "but they don't always agree it is the right word. They say they want help to be ambassadors for this vision."

The communications audit turned up several other reasons for the trouble the new denomination is having forging a clear identity: Material distributed by the Executive Board does not look like it comes from one organization, overemphasis on peacemaking at the expense of a missional identity and not enough compliance with the denomination's visual identity program.

Funding system: But the problems with identity pale in comparison to problems with the way the Executive Board receives money for its operation. Those funding-system problems required the board to reduce its budget by 12 percent this year. Most of the reduction came by cutting the number of staff members who work for the Executive Board.

"We have a hybrid system of firstfruits [giving] and remainders of past practices," said Executive Board member Jim Harder, who also chairs the board's Church Resources Committee. "There is an awkwardness [with the funding system] that leaves donors feeling there is a barrier to them giving money."

But several board members said the current system should be fixed rather than starting over with something new.

"We've come a long way in the process of teaching the firstfruits principle," said board member Leslie Francisco III, "but if we make a statement that we made a mistake [with the principle of firstfruits giving], people will really think we don't know what we are doing."

The board agreed that the problem is not with the theology of firstfruits giving but with the way contributions are distributed throughout various parts of the church. The Executive Board took action to recognize "the confusion and challenges embodied in the current system" and asked staff to work with MMA and other denominational entities to propose a funding model that will keep the theological framework of firstfruits giving while strengthening Mennonite Church USA identity and increasing funding for denominational ministries.—*Everett J. Thomas*

We've come a long way in the process of teaching the firstfruits principle.
—Leslie Francisco III

Intercultural relations

Mennonite Church USA Executive Board members Jim Harder (left) and Jane Hoober Peifer (second from right) pray on Jan. 31 for Executive Board staff member Kenyetta Aduma after the board approved the final structure of the office she directs. Formerly called the Office of Cross-Cultural Relations, it will now be called the Office of Intercultural Relations. Aduma spent the past two years working with the racial-ethnic associate groups to establish the vision, purposes and role of the office. Other Executive Board staff members in the photo are Keith Harder (second from left) from the Office of Ministerial Leadership and Marlene Kropf (right) from the Office of Congregational Life.

Everett J. Thomas

Survey: One-third excited about church

But 40 percent uneasy, confused by some aspects of Mennonite Church USA

A recent communications survey of Mennonite Church USA constituents shows that the missional church is becoming less of a mystery for them and that a fair share are excited about the direction of the new church.

About one-third of 1,137 survey participants said they are excited about the future of the church and 25 percent of participants identified "missional" as joining God's work in the world. The excitement and understanding expressed in the survey, "The People in the Pew: Perceptions of Mennonite Church USA," conducted by MMA on behalf of the denomination, are hopeful signs for church leaders.

"I am encouraged that 25 percent of our constituents understand the word 'missional' in the same way I do," said Jim Schrag, executive director for Mennonite Church USA. "That means we are beginning to build a solid base from which we can reach out together with God's message and mission to the world."

The nationwide survey—conducted in the fall of 2003—also reminded Schrag and other leaders that their work is far from done. About 40 percent of survey participants said they are uneasy about and confused by some aspects of the merger of the former Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church.

In some regards, people haven't yet translated loyalty from their General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church affiliations. One in five participants admit to not paying much attention to the transition from the old to the new denomination. And one in five people said they did not care for the word missional.

Building bridges: Mennonite Church USA can elicit more trust and attention by developing more face-to-face relationships across the denomination and by forging a more focused communications plan, said Barth Hague, vice president of marketing services for MMA Stewardship Agency in Goshen, Ind., one of two consultants hired by the Executive Board to create the survey. As part of the survey, Hague did personal interviews with church leaders in North Newton and Hesston in Kansas; Philadelphia; Bluffton, Ohio, and Harrisonburg, Va. James Nofziger, MMA's director of market research, joined Hague in the congregational survey portion of the study.

In their recommendations, Hague and Nofziger said Mennonite Church USA leaders must develop more face-to-face relationships out in the "field" if the loyalty shift is to occur. And they need to more clearly communicate that the denomination's focus is holistic. A significant segment of people said they feel the denomination is issue-oriented at the expense of its Christ-centeredness.

"I'm sensing that people in the pews haven't been given … opportunity to understand that 'missional' incorporates the balance of our Anabaptist identity," Hague said. "The word includes … personal spiritual growth—knowing Christ—that leads to following Christ in issues regarding peacemaking, racial-ethnic issues and healthy sexuality.

The survey also listed 10 issues and asked respondents to rank them in order of their urgency for Mennonite Church USA (see chart below). Spiritual growth among members was ranked as most urgent by the most people, followed by peacemaking and missions, respectively.

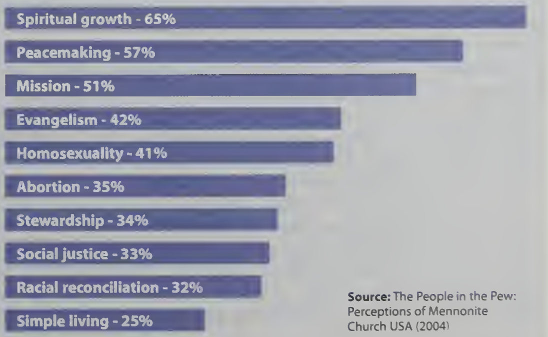
Other findings highlight some challenges the denomination faces if it wants to build a stronger future:

- Only one in five people say they feel connected to Mennonite Church USA. Five years ago, another study showed that two in five respondents said they felt connected.
- Roughly half of Mennonite Church USA constituents surveyed agree that denominational leaders share their values and priorities.
- Slightly more than half feel it is important that their congregation be part of Mennonite Church USA, while a quarter feel it is not.

Despite finding that people are feeling somewhat disconnected, Hague said, they want the new church to work and are deeply committed to a faith community that exercises faithfulness.—*Laurie L. Oswald for Mennonite Church USA*

Urgent Issues

An Executive Board survey released on Jan. 31 shows how Mennonite Church USA constituents rate 10 issues from "very urgent" to "not very urgent." Every issue listed was "very urgent" to at least one-quarter of the respondents. The only two issues rated "not urgent" by more than 15 percent of respondents were abortion and homosexuality (19 percent for each). Following are the percents reporting each issue as "very urgent."



Source: The People in the Pew: Perceptions of Mennonite Church USA (2004)

Group wants to improve preaching

Emphasis on preaching may also impact seminary curriculum, grading.

A group of people with a passion for teaching preachers in the Anabaptist tradition met Jan. 22-23 at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va. The meeting, called by EMS dean Ervin R. Stutzman and June Alliman Yoder, professor of preaching at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., explored common professional interests in the teaching of homiletics.

"This seemed the right time to hold this meeting," said Stutzman. "The 2004 School for Leadership Training at EMS focused on strengthing preaching."

A record 330 participated in the annual training event, held Jan. 19-22 at EMS. Stutzman also noted the recent release of *Anabaptist Preaching: A Conversation Between Pulpit, Pew and Bible*, a new book edited by David B. Greiser and Michael A. King (Cascadia).

Stutzman said that along with the encouragement that comes from collegial interaction "we discussed curriculum, grading, student feedback and brainstormed ways to equip preachers beyond the seminary classroom."

The group explored the possible formation of a gathering for Anabaptist teachers of preaching and decided to meet on a regular basis, likely once a year in conjunction with other larger gatherings.

"The overarching purpose for formation of such a group is to raise the level of preaching across churches in the Anabaptist tradition," Stutzman said. "We believe that, over time, this group can make a significant contribution to that end."—*Jim Bishop of EMU News Service*

Jim Bishop

Teaching preaching: Front row (left to right) David Greiser, Ryan Ahlgrim, Pieter Post, Daniel Hertzler. Back row: John R. Martin, Allan Rudy Froese, John H. Neufeld, June Alliman Yoder, Ervin R. Stutzman, Palmer Becker, Mark R. Wenger.

Launch 'culture of call' initiative

Forty-five church leaders from four Mennonite area conferences met Dec. 7-8, 2003, at Laurelville Mennonite Retreat Center in Mt. Pleasant, Pa., to discuss gift discernment and mentoring in their home congregations.

The retreat launched stage two of the "Creating a Culture of Call" initiative of Eastern Mennonite Seminary (EMS) in Harrisonburg, Va. The 15 pilot congregations from Franconia, Lancaster, Ohio and Virginia conferences of Mennonite Church USA have committed themselves to identifying and calling people to ministry, including pastoral ministry, over the next three years.

Wendy J. Miller, assistant professor of spiritual formation at EMS, addressed the gathering on spiritual discernment and mentoring, using Jesus in the Gospel of Mark as a model.

Each conference then held two sessions to discuss strategies for calling and mentoring pastors in the ministry. Participants also heard the story of congregational discernment and calling of Karl Steffy, pastor of East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church in the Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference.

Miller encouraged pastors and church leaders to reflect on their calling to ministry and think about who mentored them. She asked them to consider where pastors come from and to reflect on what kind of mentor they are.

Using Paul Versluis' paper "Making Disciplines in the Congregation," Miller discussed biblical models of mentoring, such as Barnabas, who befriended the apostle Paul. She also presented images of mentors in literature, drawing from C.S. Lewis' *The Horse and His Boy*. Miller used the model of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark, calling his disciples to be with him, to be named by him, and then to be sent out by him.

Del Glick, director of church partnerships at EMS and retreat organizer, used the image of an airplane to describe the different places congregations are at in terms of mentoring and internship programs. Some congregations are still on the ground, some are in the process of taking off and some are flying the plane. Each conference present has congregations in each of those stages, with the exception of Lancaster, which has just begun this process.—*Jim Bishop of EMU News Service*

Some congregations are still on the ground, some are in the process of taking off and some are flying.—Del Glick

MLK Day gives youth first look at MCC

Third grader says packing health kits 'better than playing video games.'

Six Mennonite congregations from the greater Philadelphia area and Philadelphia Mennonite High School (PMHS) sent 115 volunteers to Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) material resource center in Ephrata, Pa., on Jan. 19 to commemorate Martin Luther King Day.

A group of about 20 Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren in Christ congregations—called Kingdom Builders Anabaptist Network of Greater Philadelphia—organized the work day in which volunteers packed health kits.

Caroline Collins, assistant pastor and administrator of the Church of the Overcomer, says that her congregation has studied Martin Luther King Jr.'s life of service and sacrifice.

"Today is a small symbol of our giving to others and not just for taking the day off," Collins says. "This whets my appetite to do more, and I've already told some women in our church that we will be making kits to send to MCC."

Yvonne Platts, youth minister at Norristown (Pa.) New Life Mennonite Church, said that 13 adults and youth from the congregation enjoyed serving God on King's birthday.

"One of the mothers shared how she looks forward to doing things as a family on MLK Day and that the MCC trip was a perfect way to work together and help others who are in so much more need than we'll ever be," Platts says.

Marquis Norman, a freshman at PMHS, volunteered to work at MCC because his teacher challenged him to do so and this was his first visit to MCC. Valerie Griffin, a PMHS junior, says she serves every year on MLK Day; this year she came with the PMHS group to do something different.

"I have a good first impression of MCC," Griffin says. "It is the first time that I get to see behind the scenes of an international aid agency."

Mennonite Church USA

Youth from the Vietnamese Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, packing soap (left to right): Lizzy Hong, Tina Tran, Amy Tann and Emily Tran.

Tanesha Bates, a sophomore at Delaware County (Pa.) Community College volunteered so that she could do something helpful for others.

"I feel strongly about doing this and want to tell others about the kind of work MCC does," Bates says. "It is not publicized as much as it should be."

I feel strongly about doing this and want to tell others about the kind of work MCC does.—Valerie Griffin

Steven Nguyen, a fifth grader from the Vietnamese Mennonite Church, was busy checking and packing health kits. When asked why he came to work instead of taking the holiday off, he said, "I'm helping the poor, and that gives me energy."

Nguyen's friend, Andrew Le, is a third grader from the Vietnamese congregation. He worked across from Nguyen, and they seemed to have a competition going to see who could check and pack kits the fastest.

When asked why he didn't just stay home and play video games, he replied, "This is better than video games."—*J. Fred Kauffman*

1.28 million watch Mennonite worship

On Jan. 18, the worship service of a German Mennonite congregation was telecast across Germany. It was the first time a Mennonite congregation was asked to prepare a service for television. An estimated 1.28 million people watched the service.

The Weierhof Mennonite Church's service focused on the theme "Peace: Overcoming Violence Worldwide." The public channel ZDF (Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen) televises a worship service live every Sunday morning from a Catholic or a Protestant church. All 26 Protestant services in 2004—with three from free Protestant churches—will have a peace theme.

Besides giving a brief historical introduction of Mennonites and the Weierhof congregation, there were reports on bridge-building programs and activities such as the Intermenno Trainee Program and International Visitors Exchange Program. The program also provided information for tours to Poland to former Mennonite places in the Gdansk area, where many friendships have developed.

A Mennonite trainee from the United States also talked about his experiences at school after the Sept. 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center in New York City and how difficult it had been then to stand up for his beliefs.—*Mennonite World Conference*

WORKERS

Bontreger, Myron, ended Jan. 4 as associate pastor and minister of youth at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Martz, Robert, was installed Jan. 11 as Pastor at Olive Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Miller Leatherman, Jane, ended Dec. 5 as interim pastor at East Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Atwood, Brandon Charles, Jan. 11, to Chad and Tammy Martin Atwood, Lowville, N.Y.

Barnes, Claire Elizabeth, Jan. 20, to Chris and Gail Buller Barnes, Hutchinson, Kan.

Bontrager, Celia Grace, Jan. 6, to Craig and Karen Stutzman Bontrager, Milford, Neb.

Braming, Madeline Irene, Jan. 15, to Scott and Stephanie Grieser Braming, Chicago, Ill.

Clapper, Camden David, Nov. 6, to Mark and Elizabeth Clapper, Leola, Pa.

Fougeron, Hannah Morgan, Jan. 1, to Travis and Jennifer Fougeron, Milford, Neb.

Hernley, Wyatt Dwayne, Jan. 3, to Shane and Renee Nofziger Hernley, Goshen, Ind.

Hiebner, Eli Edwin, Dec. 22, to Steven and Christi Jensen Hiebner, Henderson, Neb.

Kahila, Carson Brett, Jan. 8, to Chris and Kerri Miller Kahila, Sturgis, Mich.

Kaufman, Kristin Ashley, Dec. 27, to Darin and Laura Reitz Kaufman, Olathe, Kan.

Kehrberg, Adeline Rose, Dec. 27, to Kevin and Sarah Kratzer Kehrberg, Lexington, Ky.

Lloyd, Cancienne Brody, Jan. 12, to Alan and Julie Cortez Cancienne, Des Allemands, La.

McGloughlin, Reba Ruth Yoder, Jan. 1, to Charles and Amy Yoder McGloughlin, Philadelphia.

Murphy, Megan Renee, Dec. 12, to Michael and Denise Clemens Murphy, Mishawaka, Ind.

Person, Zachary Reed Martin, Jan. 15, to Mark and Heila Martin-Person, Goshen, Ind.

Riegsecker, Gavin Dima, Jan. 21, 1999, received for adoption Dec. 10 by Alan and Tammy Riegsecker, Archbold, Ohio.

Tijerina, Jalyn Renee, Jan. 9, to Jaime and Alicia Wyse Tijerina, Archbold, Ohio.

MARRIAGES

Beachy/Bontrager: Nici Beachy, Kalona, Iowa, and Derek Bontrager, Kalona, Jan. 24 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Blount/Mackey: Philip Blount, Monroe, Wis., and Amy Mackey, Harrod, Ohio, Dec. 20 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio.

Buffington/Miller: Helen Buffington, Belleville, Pa., and Arden Miller, Belleville, Jan. 17 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Cassel/Ritter: Melissa Cassel, Souderton, Pa., and Ryan Ritter, Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 19 at Line Lexington (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Combs/Derstine: Seth Combs, Brownville, N.Y., and Hannah Derstine, Bluffton, Ohio, Jan. 10 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Crossgrove/Rodriguez: Curt Crossgrove, West Unity, Ohio, and Christina Rodriguez, Pettisville, Ohio, Nov. 8 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Hearn/Weaver: J.T. Hearn, McGaheysville, Va., and Phyllis Weaver, Harrisonburg, Va., Jan. 10 at the home of the bride.

Klippenstein/Wahl: Rachel Klippenstein, Altona, Man., and Alexander Ryan Wahl, Halbstadt, Man., Dec. 20 at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

DEATHS

Basinger, Leonard Wallace, 88, Sebring, Ohio, died Jan. 18. Spouse: Agnes Basinger (deceased). Parents: Seth and Gertrude Ziegler Basinger. Children: J. Paul, Ed, Kathy Detro, Norma Diller; 10 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 22 at North Lima (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Beck, Harley, 95, Archbold, Ohio, died Jan. 17. Spouse: Francis Beck (deceased). Parents: Peter and Sarah Nafziger Beck. Children: Charles, Donald, Arlene, Vern; 14 grandchildren; 32 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 19 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Benner, Marvin Y., 86, Earlington, Pa., died Oct. 26. Spouse: Kathryn Alderfer Benner. Parents: Charles and Leanna Yoder Benner. Children: Gerald, Carolyn, Kenneth, Christine Stutzman, Arlin; 12 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 31 at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Berkey, Alta Miller, 91, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 15. Spouse: Perry E. Berkey (deceased). Parents: Josiah and Anna Nelson Miller. Child: Maurice; five grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 20 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind.

Birkey, Ellis, 90, Fisher, Ill., died Dec. 26. Spouse: Wilma Birkey (deceased). Parents: Alvin R. and Amelia Birkey. Children: Pat Heiser, Larry; three grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 30 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher.

Birkey, Wilma Hedrick, 89, Fisher, Ill., died Dec. 31. Spouse: Ellis "Turk" Birkey (deceased). Parents: Hugh and Nola Hedrick. Children: Pat Heiser, Larry; three grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 3 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher.

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Burkey, Floyd, 86, Milford, Neb., died Nov. 6. Spouse: Erma Burkey. Parents: John C. and Alma Troyer Burkey. Children: Janet Sommerfeld, Paulene Anderson, John, Loree, Kathy Wiens; 11 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 10 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

Castellow, Marvin, 43, Chesapeake, Va., died Jan. 13. Spouse: Shirley Bergey Castellow. Parents: James and Ann Castellow. Children: Thomas Wayne, Scott James, LeAnne Dawn. Funeral: Jan. 17 at Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church, Chesapeake.

Chupp, Delight, 69, Pueblo, Colo., died Dec. 30 of cardiac arrest. Spouse: Ivan Chupp. Parents: Eli E. and Florence Steiner Kanagy. Children: Jay Dee, Melody Ann Rogers, Karen Marie Reed, Darlene Kay; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 3 at Smithville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Clemmer, Ada N., 72, Doylestown, Pa., died Jan. 22. Parents: Jacob and Edna Nyce Clemmer. Funeral: Jan 27 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Coffey, Earl D., 82, Stuarts Draft, Va., died Dec. 30 of heart failure. Spouse: Edna Clark Coffey (deceased). Parents: Ernest and Rose Taylor Coffey. Children: Edna Mae Dunn, Gayle Arehart, Sara Link, Donna Kay Bosserman; seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 3 at Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro, Va.

Fielitz, Dale A., 87, Archbold, Ohio, died Oct. 20. Spouse: Vieanna Fielitz (deceased). Parents: John and Verna Fielitz. Children: Sandra Nofziger, Jon, Jo Anne Rupp; nine grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 23 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Fry, Pearl Irene, 95, West Liberty, Ohio, died Dec. 28. Parents: Samuel and Elsie Rebecca King Fry. Foster-daughter: Julie Marguerite Reed-Byler. Funeral: Jan. 5 at South Union Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

Goertz, Fritz, 75, Archbold, Ohio, died Jan. 25 of cancer. Spouse: Ursula Goertz. Parents: Gustav and Elisabeth Goertz. Children: Ilse-Marie, Juergen, Mark; four grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 29 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Groff, Clarence V., 97, Kinzer, Pa., died Jan. 12. Spouse: Mabel Martin Groff (deceased). Parents: John H. and Anna Brackbill Groff. Children: Mildred, Almeda, Landis, Harold; eight grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 16 at Kinzer Mennonite Church.

Janzen, Bernard Henry "B.H.", 107, North Newton, Kan., died Jan. 23. Spouse: (1st) Cathryn Janzen (deceased), (2nd) Marie Regier Franz Janzen (deceased). Parents: Henry W. and Mary Goertz Janzen. Children: Elmer H. (deceased), Beulah Deckert (deceased); 11 grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 27 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

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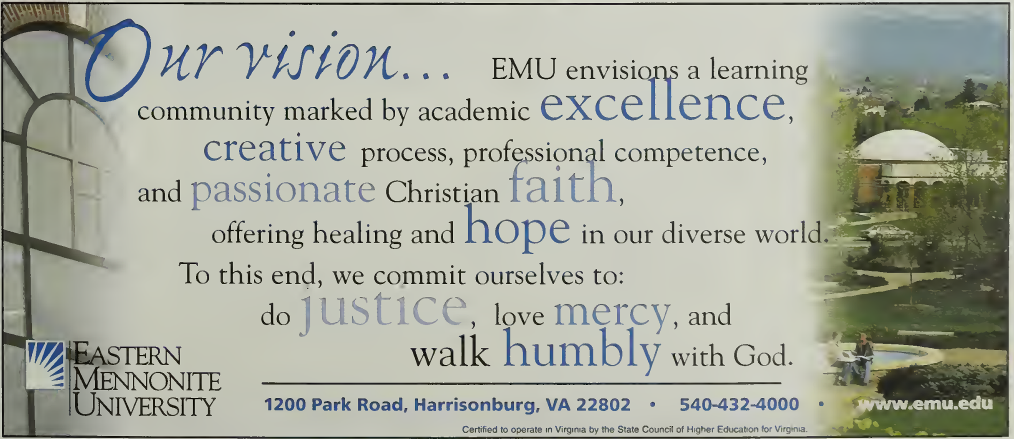

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Kauffman, Wilma E., 91, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, died Jan. 8. Spouse: Max Kauffman (deceased). Parents: William and Anna Eicher Boshart. Children: Diane Roth, Robert, William; seven grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 10 at Wayland (Iowa) Mennonite Church.

Massanari, Karl L., 88, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 27. Spouse: Christine Yoder Massanari (deceased). Parents: Joe and Lizzie Sommer Massanari. Children: Ronald, Jared, Ken, Jeff; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 29 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Meck, Jay A., 68, Gordonville, Pa., died Dec. 27. Spouse: Ruth Landis Meck. Parents: Isaac and Lizzie Levever Meck. Children: J. Robert, John D.; nine grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 31 at Kinzer Mennonite Church, Kinzer, Pa.

Moyer, Harlan, 72, Harleysville, Pa., died Jan. 17. Spouse: Gladys Moyer. Parents: Elmer B. and Lena Stout Moyer. Children: Brent, Coleen Bishop, Janet; five grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 23 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville.

Moyer, Norman, 90, Souderton, Pa., died Jan. 17. Spouse: Eva L. Moyer. Parents: Elysses and Ella Landis Moyer. Children: Claude L., Ray L., Virginia Landis, Elaine; 12 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 21 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Naffziger, Lela Miller, 100, Hesston, Kan., died Dec. 20. Spouse: Benjamin H. Naffziger (deceased). Parents: James J. and Emma C. Brobst Miller. Children: Clifford (deceased), Leonard (deceased); one grandchild; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 27 at Showalter Villa, Hesston.

Nafziger, Beatrice Slabaugh, 96, Eureka, Ill., died Jan. 17. Spouse: Orrin Nafziger (deceased). Parents: Niles M. and Sadie Huffman Slabaugh. Children: Lloyd, E. Wayne, Lorene Good; 14 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren; eight great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 21 at Hopedale (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Nebel, Edith Rich, 82, Wayland, Iowa, died Jan. 5. Spouse: Clayton Nebel. Parents: Joseph and Myrtle Rich. Children: Ledru, Dorthy Truman, Betty Hocker, Jean Eubanks, Nadine Giudicessi; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 8 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Rahn, Benjamin P., 90, Inman, Kan., died Jan. 7. Spouse: Tena Wieler Rahn. Parents: Peter G. and Gertrude Pankratz Rahn. Children: Ivan, Eugene, Frances Nunemacher; six grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 12 at Inman Mennonite Church.

Raid, Howard D., 91, Bluffton, Ohio, died Jan. 15. Spouse: Della I. Clark. Parents: Harvey and Clara Raid. Child: Elizabeth Raid; step-children Mary Clark Reardon, Maurice Clark; three grandchildren; four step-grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 24 at Zion Mennonite Church, Donnellson, Iowa.

Rempel, Janice R., 65, Reedley, Calif., died Dec. 14. Spouse: Wendell Rempel. Parents: Carl and Cleo McDonald. Children: Lorene Regier, Carl, Michelle Roman; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 19 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Roth, Robert, 79, Milford, Neb., died Nov. 9. Spouse: Grace Roth. Parents: Abe and Mary Gasho Roth. Children: Diane Stutzman, Charlotte, Terry, Lonnie, Robert; 14 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 12 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

Pletcher, Byron, 97, Perryton, Texas, died Dec. 29. Spouse: Gordie Taliaferro Pletcher (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Maria Pletcher. Children: B.R. Pletcher, Wilma Srof, Juanita Dietz, Margie; 10 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 31 at Perryton Mennonite Church.

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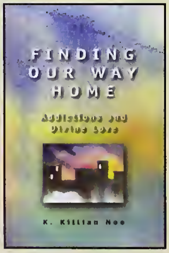

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Slagell, Earl, 92, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 26. Spouse: (1st) Dorothy Sharick Slagell (deceased), (2nd) Annabelle Kauffman Slagell (deceased). Parents: Sam and Barbara Zehr Slagell. Children: Richard, Loretta Newcomer, Jeanette Slabaugh, Barbara Landis; 11 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 31 at East Goshen Mennonite Church.

Smith, Alferd E., 73, Henderson, Neb., died Jan. 3. Spouse: Marylss Siebert Smith (deceased). Parents: Henry H. and Margaret Friesen Smith. Children: Gwendolyn Trim, Barbara Senff; four grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 8 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Thierry, Lucie, 98, Archbold, Ohio, died Jan. 18. Spouse: Kores Thierry (deceased). Parents: Emanual and Magdelena Hartman. Children: Carl, Paul (deceased); nine grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 22 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Wambold, Oswin, 76, Souderton, Pa., died Jan. 17. Spouse: Betty Freed Wambold. Parents: Oswin and Alice Keiser Wambold. Child: Judy Tyson; two grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 22 at Souderton Mennonite Church.

Wenger, Letha, 94, Columbiana, Ohio, died Dec. 23. Spouse: David Wenger (deceased). Parents: William and Orpha Metzler Brunk. Children: Rachel Martin, Glen, Dale, Alan; 13 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 28 at Midway Mennonite Church, Columbiana.

Wiebe, Eva, 88, Altona, Man., died Jan. 7. Spouse: Peter G. Wiebe (deceased). Parents: Heinrich and Anna Kehler Dueck. Children: Henry, Martha, Esther, Bob, John, Alvin; 12 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 11 at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Man.

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Morden Mennonite Church, located in southern Manitoba, Canada, requires a full-time ***senior pastor*** for a congregation of 300 members. Candidate should be an enthusiastic individual willing to provide spiritual leadership and guidance and is committed to an Anabaptist understanding of faith.

For more information please contact Ruth Derksen, Chair, Pastoral Search Committee, 901 Gilmour St., Morden, MB R6M 1R9; email jrderkse@mts.net.

Western Mennonite School Board of Directors has announced a search for applicants for the position of ***principal*** to begin July 2004. Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students both local and at a distance. Located on 45 acres in the Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience with a comprehensive vision for expanding enrollment, program and facilities. Requests for information can be addressed to Search Committee, Western Mennonite School, 9045 Wallace Road NW, Salem, OR 97304; wmsoffice@telelport.com.

Eastern Mennonite High School has the following teaching position openings for the 2004-05 school year: ***science 8 & 9, high school English and high school English/Bible.*** If you share the call for distinctively Mennonite education in a Christ-centered academic environment we welcome your inquiry and application. Please express your interest to Paul G. Leaman, Principal, via person, email leamanp@emhs.net or phone 540-432-4502. EMHS is an equal opportunity employer.

Mennonite Central Committee is accepting applications for the position of ***MCC Central States executive director.*** The director provides vision and oversight for all MCC programs in Central States. Familiarity with MCC constituency, strong relational administrative skills and cultural competency required. Experience with budgeting, administration, Spanish language skills preferred. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply. Significant travel time within the United States.

Contact Charmayne Brubaker, 717-859-1151, cdb@mcc.org or your nearest MCC office for the full job description. Application review begins February 2004. Position available at that time.

Like an international experience while staying in the U.S.? **International Guest House** in Washington, D.C., has openings for ***voluntary service assignments,*** one immediately and one in August. Opening for host/hostess in July. Contact International Guest House, 1441 Kennedy St. NW, Washington, DC 20011. Phone 202-726-5808; email igh-dc@juno.com.

Central California Mennonite Residential Services in Fresno, Calif., seeks a full-time ***executive director.*** CCMRS provides residential services and programs to persons with developmental disabilities. It is affiliated with West Coast MCC and with Mennonite Health Services. Deadline for applications is March 1.

For further information and application forms please contact Ken Janzen, Board of Directors, Central Calif. Mennonite Residential Services, P. O. Box 5298, Fresno, CA 93755-5298; email ccmrs@mindspring.com.

Jamaica Mennonite Church announces openings for two ***family practice physicians*** to work in church clinics: Good Tidings Mennonite Church, Kingston (urban), and Joyland Mennonite Church, St. Elizabeth (rural). Physicians are responsible for overall health of patients and oversight of nurse assistants and medical records personnel. Physicians must be currently licensed, committed to the Anabaptist faith, available for three to five years and start by September or as soon as possible. For information contact Beth Brunk, HR Coordinator, Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions, Harrisonburg, Va.; 540-434-9727 or info@vmbm.org.

Bluffton College seeks applications for the position of ***assistant campus pastor/spiritual life coordinator.*** This person will work closely with the campus pastor to attend to the spiritual needs and care of the campus-wide community and work closely with various student religious life groups. Other duties will involve assisting with planning for a variety of workshop settings, working with the church relations department in the coordination of off-campus ministry groups and assist in a variety of programs related to the Pathways initiative (i.e. women in ministry, sophomore retreat). Applicants should have a committed faith in Jesus Christ and a love for college-age young adults. A Master of Divinity degree is preferred along with related ministry experience and an appreciation for the Anabaptist-Mennonite peace church expression of the Christian faith. This position is an initiative of the Pathways to Mission and Vocation initiative funded through a Lilly Grant.

Send letter of application, resumé and three references to Don Schweingruber, Vice President and Dean of Student Life, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Suite 1, Bluffton, OH 45817. Applications should be received by March 1. Bluffton College reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. People who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

Needed: an **MCC *East Asia director*** in Akron, Pa. This person is responsible for programs and workers in Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Japan, North and South Korea and Taiwan. Experience in East Asia required, preferably at primary and management levels. Demonstrated administrative, supervisory and relational skills needed, along with a Christian faith, active church membership and commitment to nonviolent peacemaking. Contact Charmayne Brubaker, 717-859-1151, cdb@mcc.org or your nearest MCC office for a job description. Application review begins immediately. Position available in June.

Goshen College department of sociology/anthropology and social work seeks applicants for a ***tenure-track position in sociology*** beginning August 2004. We are seeking a candidate who has a curricular focus in the areas of sociological theory and methods. Consideration will be given to any specialization within sociology. Additional background in anthropology is preferred. Candidates must exhibit strong teaching credentials. A Ph.D. in sociology is required by Fall 2004.

To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, www.goshen.edu/employment. Women and minority persons are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Closing date for applications is Feb. 27.

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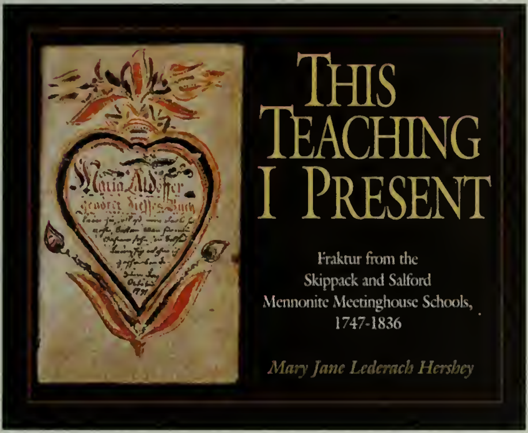

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Code word: It's fiction

Gordon Houser

In January I joined hundreds of thousands who have read *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown. I did not, however, join the many who have kept it at the top of the best-seller list for months; I borrowed a copy.

This novel follows the genre of intellectual thriller. Its hero is a symbologist who with others uncovers a conspiracy to hide the truth about Jesus Christ having married Mary Magdalene, who later moved to France.

This kind of fiction is fun to read; it has plenty of action and suspense. Brown keeps one reading by employing the tricks of this genre. But he also tosses out any number of so-called facts and interpretations of history and art that may wow most readers and lead them to think this stuff is really true.

What people should remember is that this is fiction. Not only that, Brown's scholarly sounding interpretations are for the most part bogus. He draws on books that can only generously be called fringe scholarship (with the exception of Elaine Pagels' *The Gnostic Gospels*) to make some outlandish claims, most of them directed against the Roman Catholic Church, which the book says is out to destroy evidence that Jesus was really married and that his divinity was something concocted by Constantine.

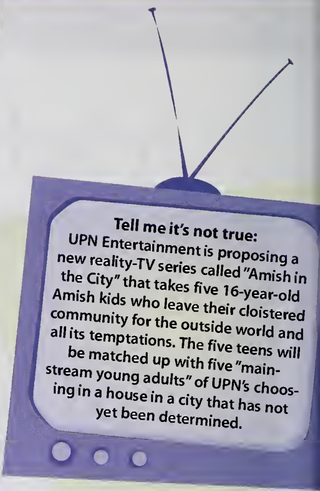
If you want to read a pretty thorough refutation of Brown's so-called scholarship, read an article by Sandra Miesel in the September 2003 issue of *Crisis* (www.crisismagazine.com).

As to Jesus' divinity being a late addition to the church's teaching, a recent book addresses that point with more thoroughness than you may have the time or the scholarly background to tackle.

Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity by Larry W. Hurtado (Eerdmans, 2003, $55) is a large (746 pages) and important book. Hurtado shows that a noteworthy devotion to Jesus (1) "emerges phenomenally early in circles of his followers," (2) "was exhibited in an unparalleled intensity and diversity of expression" and (3) "was offered and articulated characteristically within a firm stance of exclusivist monotheism."

Hurtado needs to put out another edition of this book that is written simpler (clearer), without the many references to scholars he is refuting, and is about a third the length.

Even then it would not be as fun to read, perhaps, as *The Da Vinci Code*, but it would be much closer to the historical record.



Tell me it's not true: UPN Entertainment is proposing a new reality-TV series called "Amish in the City" that takes five 16-year-old Amish kids who leave their cloistered community for the outside world and all its temptations. The five teens will be matched up with five "mainstream young adults" of UPN's choosing in a house in a city that has not yet been determined.

BEST FILMS OF 2003

1. The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King
2. Mystic River
3. Dirty Pretty Things
4. Capturing the Friedmans
5. Lost in Translation
6. American Splendor
7. Thirteen
8. In America
9. Spellbound
10. Cold Mountain

BOOKS

A Global Mennonite History: Volume One: Africa by Alemu Checole with Samuel Asefa, Bekithemba Dube, Doris Dube, Michael Kodzo Badasu, Erik Kumedisa, Barbara Nkala, I.U. Nsasak, Siaka Traore and Pakisa Tshimika (Pandora Press and Herald Press, 2003, $27.50) is the first of a projected five-volume series. The authors look at the African context and the continent's history before detailing the history of the various Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in Africa. This eye-opening book shows the diversity of those churches and the richness they offer the rest of the global church.

FILMS

House of Sand and Fog (R) shows the tragic results that lead from a clerical error compounded by cross-cultural conflict and desperate people. A former colonel in the Iranian military and a woman with substance-abuse problems vie for ownership of a house. (They should have called Mennonite Mediation Services.)

21 Grams (R) is about the eroding power of grief and guilt. With a confusing narrative style and coincidence bordering on melodrama, it brings together three characters in great pain. The actors are outstanding and make the story convincing.

Big Fish (PG-13) recounts the outlandish adventures of a man who loves to tell a good story. His son, unhappy with this, stops communicating with his father until the older man is dying. Eventually he comes to terms with who his father is and embraces it.

VIDEOS

Freaky Friday (PG) is a humorous remake of a movie about a mother and daughter who exchange places for a day and come to appreciate each other. Though fairly predictable, it offers pleasant surprises and some important lessons.

From our readers

Mere Discipleship: Radical Christianity in a Rebellious World by Lee C. Camp (Brazos Press, 2003, $14.99) shakes up the conventional assumptions of an American Christianity that fails to understand the cruciform ways of God's kingdom. Camp also encourages disciples to seek integrity between the means and the ends as they "embody God's intentions for the world as revealed in Christ."—*Ted Lewis, Portland, Ore.*

Henry Climbs a Mountain by Donald B. Johnson (Houghton Mifflin, 2003, $15) uses a bear modeled after the real Henry David Thoreau to show why a citizen may not support a state's practice of slavery. This juvenile book is a delight.—*Donald D. Kaufman, Newton, Kan.*

100
Horsepower

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dozen people
or a
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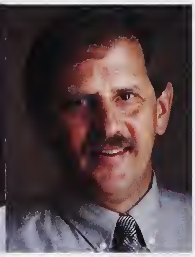

Everett J. Thomas

Missional and manure

Asked what he thought about using the word "missional" to describe Mennonite Church USA, one respondent explained on his questionnaire why he did not like it.

"Where I came from, 'mish' meant 'manure' as in, 'That cow just mished all over; we must rewash her before milking her.' Therefore, to me and others of Amish background, 'missional' sounds like … 'manurable,' an embarrassing word!"

That response was one of many in a massive survey designed to learn how members of Mennonite Church USA view the new denomination. Called "The People in the Pew: Perceptions of Mennonite Church USA," the survey confirmed what others have been saying: Many members do not like the word "missional" as a descriptor for our new denomination (see page 21).

It may not be a surprise to learn there is dissatisfaction with the word. But what is surprising is who doesn't like it: those with high Mennonite identity (as defined by the consultants from MMA Stewardship Agency's communications department). This means those most loyal to our church are the ones who object most.

"This is the one time in the entire survey where people with high Mennonite identity expressed more negative feelings than those with low Mennonite identity," said the consultants.

The Mennonite Church USA Executive Board commissioned the survey last year and released the results during its Jan. 29-31 meeting in Portland, Ore. One leader from Pacific Northwest Conference also described how he handles grumbling about the word.

"I have more conversations where people groan (about using the word) than don't," said Duncan Smith, PNMC's conference minister team leader. "I tell them to just get over it."

The use of the word in Mennonite Church USA emerged from the process whereby the mission agencies merged, not the broader transformation process. Consequently it became a shorthand way to describe what leaders hope will be distinctive about the new denomination. But it is problematic to assume that our denomination is missional while the rest of the Christian church is not. It is also presumptuous to use the word to suggest that our new denomination is missional while the former General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church denominations were not.

As Executive Board members discussed the word—within the larger context of how to develop "brand identity" for Mennonite Church USA—several turned to the denominational vision statement. To be "missional," they said, is "to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world."

James Lapp describes what it means to be a missional church (page 8). The challenge, he notes, is to align everything we do to God's mission in the world. If we do that—and not simply anoint our current busyness with the word "missional"—we will be a missional church. The trick is to be missional without using the word. Doing so will also mean more church members can describe their church without groans or embarrassment.—*ejt*

Farewell to Rich Preheim

Rich Preheim left *The Mennonite* on Jan. 31 after serving on our staff since the magazine's inception in 1998. As the magazine's news editor, Rich sorted through the weekly flow of news releases that come to us for publication. His position required that he decide what was newsworthy and, at times, "unspin" stories that carried too much bias. In addition, Rich covered an occasional area conference session, Mennonite Church USA's Constituency Leaders Council meetings and the biennial Delegate Assembly. Rich received awards from the Associated Church Press for several of his original news stories, including first place for "Unflagging Faithfulness" (July 2, 2002). It will be difficult to replace the training, experience and meticulousness that Rich brought to his work.

Rich's departure is the result of budget cutting that leaves us with one associate editor. News editing and reporting will now be shared by the editor, Everett J. Thomas, and the associate editor, Gordon Houser.

The Mennonite

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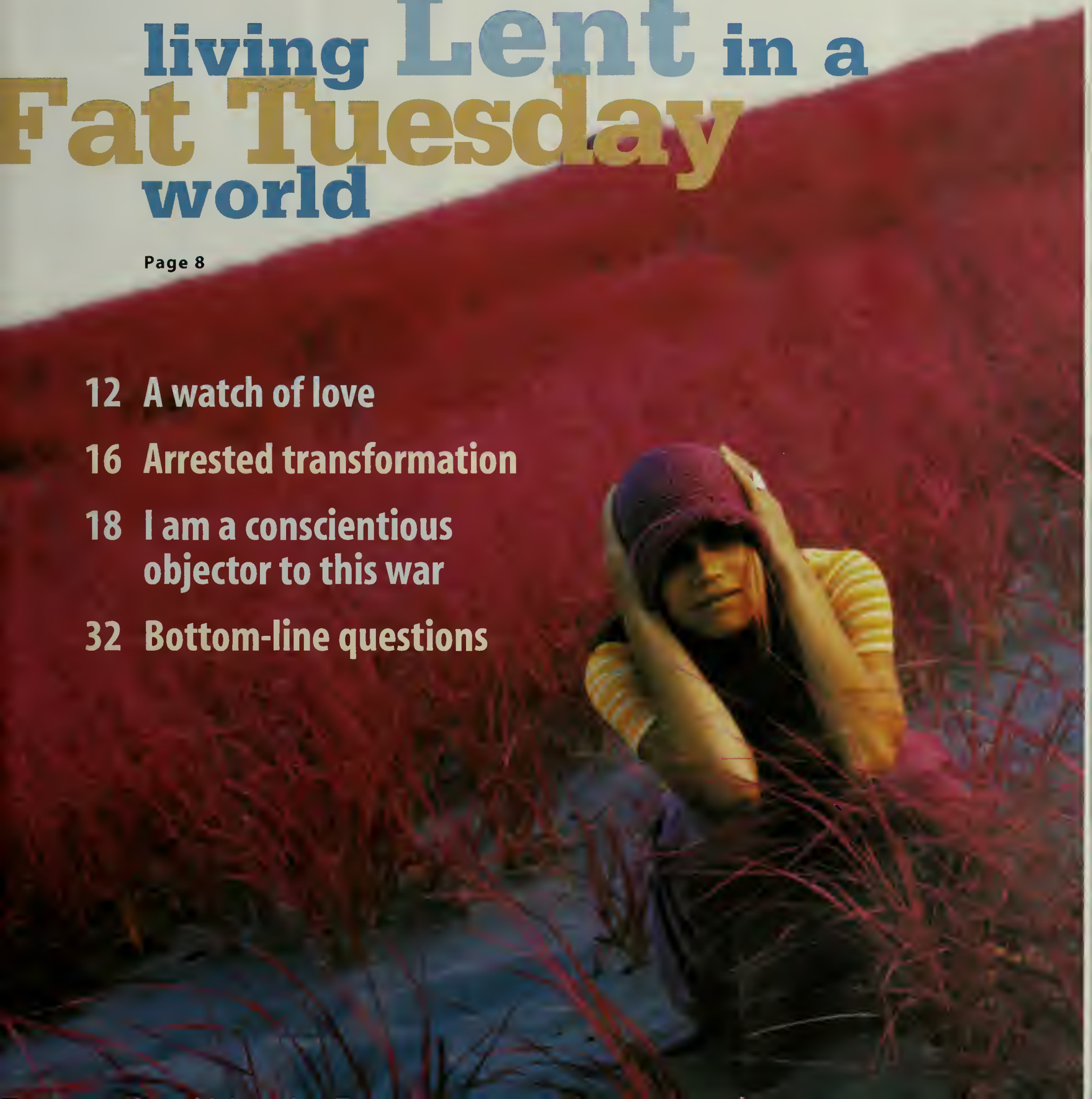

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Emissaries from another realm

Karl McKinney, **former co-pastor at Reba Place of Rogers Park in Chicago, now works for Mennonite Mission Network.**

We are Christ's ambassadors, and God is using us to speak to you.—2 Corinthians 5:20 (NLT)

When Paul wrote these words to the church in Corinth, he was borrowing governmental terminology to describe the apostles' role. The apostles respected the current order, without devotion. In addition to their role in the church, the apostles had in mind their role outside the church to the wider world of neighbors. These neighbors had not yet heard of the Son of God (verses 14ff.).

The apostles went into the world as emissaries from another realm, holding a deposit from God to give to creation. Determining their actions and defining the assertions in this letter was the apostles' awareness of the "solemn fear of the Lord."

The activism of the apostles followed an agenda from God's kingdom, in a realm that operated according to different purposes and priorities. The apostles understood themselves and bore a responsibility to the church that later congregations felt obligated to imitate. This may have been due in part to the fact the apostles understood themselves as God's "servants," "slaves" and "ambassadors" for the sake of the church; it does not appear the apostles expected any of the congregations to adopt these self-understandings and the accompanying manner of life.

Outside my home, I experience mental anguish over the idea that I am anyone's slave. However many people reside there, such as migrant farm workers and sex slaves, it is a lonely place.

Yet the apostles' self-understanding as slaves of God, an identity rejected by the churches in later centuries, convicts me in a nation flooded with people passionately given to pursuing their rights.

In a sense, the apostles were fitting into a society in which more than half the population was enslaved. For Paul in particular to make such a transition, however, was counter to Israel's effort to tear off the yoke of Rome and to the cherished Roman status of citizen, which he previously enjoyed.

Where is the conviction that we belong to God for God's purpose? Why is it such a radical notion that the church in its entirety should yield to God what words will come out of our mouths? In a time when slavery is more widespread than during the African slave trade, can the church envision itself in relation to God through such a radical concept? Can we understand discipleship meaning that we, "slaves" of Christ, will do as God directs us, even through our speech?

There is a compelling and instructive consistency between the apostles' self-understanding as slaves of Christ, Christ's ambassadors, the equivalent of mouthpieces for God and Jesus' instruction that his disciples "sell your possessions, give to the poor and come, follow me" and "deny yourselves, take up your cross and follow me."

When symmetry between these instructions of Christ and modern discipleship become apparent, the rest of the church awakens and takes notice. It is rare indeed that Mother Teresa and Princess Diana die in the same season, displaying for the world what discipleship looks like compared with mere Christianity.

Somehow today in all the church, the normal, self-preoccupied Christian life has to give way to the abnormal Mother Teresa-style radical discipleship. When will the slave, the servant, the meek and the living sacrifice move from the margins and become the norms for discipleship? When will overfed American disciples become poor, lowering themselves as Christ humbled himself? Those who do so will meet a desperate fight trying to replace a host of demons that imprison disciples in service to self and, silenced by the fierce glares and violent rhetoric of the people God sends his church to make disciples.

TheMennonite

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Philadelphia stories

Hats off to *The Mennonite* staff for the outstanding Feb. 3 issue. I was particularly moved with Leonard Dow's article, "Can Anything Good Come Out of Philadelphia?" His optimism about the network of 22 diverse Anabaptist Kingdom Builder congregations and the 90 young people that Philadelphia Mennonite High School educates each year is noteworthy. I pray that as members of Mennonite Church USA we will keep our ears and hearts attuned to what God is saying to us through our sisters and brothers in the inner city.—*Glen A. Roth, Lancaster, Pa.*

I had difficulty understanding Julie Prey-Harbaugh's article ("Holding On and Letting Go," Feb. 3). It left me confused and uncertain how to relate to those of a different color from me. Prey-Harbaugh's use of Robert Karen's quote is really confusing and difficult to understand: "Obsessive regret … through regret we deny ourselves the space to be … there is only bitterness and grudge." Also the latter statement, "To let go of our shame we must hold on to our culture," does not have meaning for me. I enjoyed reading Leonard Dow's article ("Can Anything Good Come Out of Philadelphia?"). It was much easier to understand and applicable.—*John Bergey, Hesston, Kan.*

My Haitian sister

As former program coordinator for short-term missions and one who desires to both learn and serve, I was profoundly touched by Mary Clemmer's poetic reflection, "My Haitian Sister" (Feb. 3). Were more of us to come to similar conclusions related to short-term missions experiences, we might actually begin to learn something.—*Kathleen L. Roth, Tremont, Ill.*

Re the poem and photo layout called "My Haitian Sister": The poem was beautiful, gripping, utterly sincere and very fitting for an issue dealing with racism and related issues. The photo too was a good choice. The expression on the young woman's face makes one want to ask, "What are you thinking?" and "What are you feeling?" as we pass through her country with our good intentions. But "my Haitian sisters" do not look like the young woman in the photo.

Haiti is unique in the Caribbean in that 99.9 percent of the population are descendants of West African slaves. They are African-Americans, not Native Americans or Latin Americans. Please, in the future, consult with someone who has first-hand knowledge of a country before publishing a piece with such a glaring discrepancy. It was a huge flaw in an otherwise excellent piece. And I wonder how it would make a Haitian feel.—*Verna Zook, Iowa City, Iowa*

Missed the boat

We Mennonite Central Committee workers in Nepal enjoy receiving *The Mennonite*. We apologize for not offering a tour of this Hindu kingdom to the Philadelphia Mennonite High School graduate featured in your Jan. 20 edition ("Four Windows on Mennonite Education"). She was selected "to work aboard a world-touring ship that began its journey Oct. 22 in Nepal." Unfortunately, none of us could find the port.—*Richard Heggen, Nepal*

Mennonite education

Re the Mennonite education issue (Jan. 20): I am concerned by your cover photo and other pictures inside. The reality is that Mennonite institutions do not have enough people of color represented to have them on the cover of the magazine. I would have welcomed an article reporting on how many people of color are enrolled in Mennonite schools.

Mennonites have good educational institutions but lack integrity in not being more "missional" to let people of color enjoy this kind of education. The gap is widening, since those who would like to go to one of these institutions do not have the resources to attend. While white Mennonites enjoy the system, many others simply have to keep struggling to help their families meet their needs.

Mennonite education programs need to aggressively involve young people of color who someday, if the system allows them, can help build the kingdom of God in the United States and Canada.
—*N. Raul Bogoya, Winnipeg*

Thank you for the editorial "Bless the Teacher" (Jan. 20). Three of our four children are elementary teachers. Our children teach in public schools,

IN THIS ISSUE

This year we are not publishing a Lenten issue. Rather we use the contrast between Fat Tuesday (Mardi Gras) traditions and Lenten sobriety as a way to illustrate the choices before Christians all year long. As Alan Kauffman says, "The world will continue on, living in the Fat Tuesday pace of life … but we need to be still and know that God is still God" (page 9). Kathleen Walker, a Mennonite Central Committee worker in Somalia, describes how she was forced to "be still" (page 10). Through a series of developments beyond her control, Walker discovered that her self-reliance interfered with the comfort and help God can provide. In "A Watch of Love" (page 12), Walt Friesen offers ways we can also provide comfort and help to loved ones who are dying. David Gale's experience with a casket and a lost billfold (page 14) provides a quirky reminder that God will attend to matters great and small.—*Editor* but they all went to Christian elementary and secondary schools. We see firsthand what our children do each day. Each teaches in a different part of the state. Each day is a new and wonderful opportunity for them to make a difference in their students' lives. We applaud all teachers; they have one of the hardest professions.

Our church honored all teachers in our congregation on Christian Education Sunday with a prayer and dedication for them. They are truly blessed people.—*Tom and Becky Scheetz, Harleysville, Pa.*

Canadian news sensationalized

The headline "Canadian Giving Behind Budget" in the Jan. 6 News Digest is troublesome. The original release did not suggest that giving was behind budget but that the 2003 giving pattern was similar to the previous year. The first sentence of the second paragraph ties "deep cuts in 2003" to trends in subsequent giving. Our news release made no such connection. In fact, the Canadian church has responded generously: Mennonite Church Canada achieved more than 99 percent of its donation budget. We thank God for the response of congregations and individuals to the ministries we do together.

Crediting this interpretation as "Mennonite Church Canada News Service" is inappropriate. Certainly the release was issued by us, but its interpretation went too far toward sensationalizing the news.—*Dan Dyck, director of communications, Mennonite Church Canada*

Chicago Mennonites not divided

Reference was made to Chicago Mennonite Learning Center in a recent letter to the editor (Readers Say, Feb. 3). Contrary to what was written, CMLC is not split from Mennonites in the area. Rather it is one of several projects that are bringing Mennonites together in the Chicago area and in the Midwest.

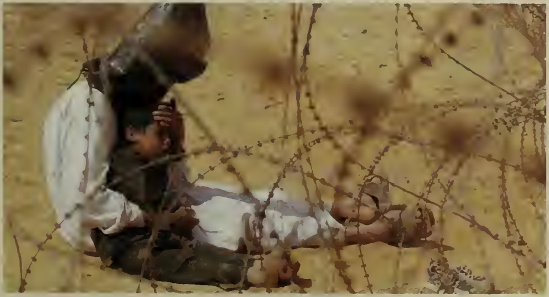
At CMLC, a K-8 elementary school, 85 ethnically and economically diverse students receive a quality Christian education enriched with Bible teaching and conflict-resolution training in each classroom. Students come from a variety of church backgrounds, not just Mennonite. The school is located at the juncture of three distinct, ethnic neighborhoods on the city's southwest side and is a catalyst for new friendships among children and their families across barriers that so often divide the city.

In addition to steadily increasing academic test scores, we are developing a program to find Mennonite college scholarships for graduates after high school. Many of the staff members are themselves recent graduates of Mennonite colleges. The board of directors represents nine Mennonite congregations in Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, four of these in the Chicago area. Donors include 44 Mennonite congregations in six Midwestern states and individuals from 36 states and one Canadian province. The cooperative support of many volunteers and donors in the Chicago area and beyond makes possible this vital mission.—*Leanne Schertz, president, CMLC board of directors*

R-rated movies

Re "Why I Write About R-rated Movies" (Mediaculture, Jan. 20): I could not agree more about the movie *Dirty, Pretty Things*. This was one of the most moving films my husband and I viewed last year. Because I teach so many immigrant children, it hit home for me. This film reflected the many layers of folks caught in the stratification ladder, and it reeled us into their lives. Likewise, *In America*, another film which helps Americans catch a look in the mirror at the underside of our society, deserves our recognition and discussion. So many alternative films are being produced now, and I welcome Gordon Houser's critique and his courage in bringing these titles to readers of *The Mennonite*. —*Sara Fretz-Goering, Silver Spring, Md.*

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*



Talking to our children

This winning World Press 2003 photo is a picture of a captured Iraqi father with a hood over his head, behind American barbwire. He is consoling his son in his arms. I imagine he is trying to assuage his young son's fears and trying to explain what is happening.

What would we tell our son if we were the captured father? What are we telling our sons and daughters now?—*Gordon Allaby, Moundridge, Kan.*

Do you know the way to San Jose?

PORTLAND, Ore.—At its Jan. 31 meeting in Portland, Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board selected San Jose, Calif., as the site for the 2007 Mennonite Church USA convention.

Jorge Vallejos, director of the Executive Board's office of convention planning, negotiated with three cities prior to the board meeting: Indianapolis, Salt Lake City, Utah, and San Jose. According to an evaluation system the convention office uses to rank 20 site factors—including cost and availability of hotel rooms and the suitability of convention facilities—Salt Lake City had the greatest number of advantages, with Indianapolis ranked second. The board also recognized that Indianapolis would be the location to which the most number of participants could drive. The board chose San Jose, however, because it is on the West Coast.

The last time a Mennonite convention was held on the West Coast was in 1991, when the Mennonite Church convention was held in Eugene, Ore. Charlotte, N.C., is the site of the 2005 convention.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Mennonite Publishing Network repays loan

WATERLOO, Ont., and SCOTTDALE, Pa.—At the end of January, Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) completed its Barn Raising Campaign after paying off $1.3 million of a $2.3 million short-term loan. The remaining $1 million is to be amortized over eight years.

Launched in the spring of 2002, the Barn Raising Campaign was part of an effort by MPN to halt rising debt and to transform its publishing ministry. Along with major downsizing and restructuring, MPN obtained the short-term loan from an anonymous donor in order to pay back holders of unregistered debenture notes. The due date for the loan, originally Aug. 31, 2003, was extended to Jan. 31.

MPN paid $1,422,500 toward this loan ($1.3 million principal plus interest)—63 percent ($897,140) from donations and 37 percent ($525,360) from operations.

For the remaining $1 million, MPN obtained a loan from the Church Investment Loan Fund, administered by Eastern Mennonite Missions in Salunga, Pa. The fund issues notes to investors and uses the proceeds to provide below-market loans to church-related agencies.

Ron Sawatsky, MPN Board chair, says: "We must still pay back the remaining portion (about $3.7 million) of the original debt of $5 million. We plan to do this over the next eight to 10 years using a combination of funds from MPN operations and contributions."

MPN's goal is to raise about $300,000 in annual contributions from its constituency. It is consulting with Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA to develop an ongoing fund-raising program.

A portion of the contributions will be used for new projects, such as the development costs for a new Sunday school curriculum to be released in 2006.—*Mennonite Publishing Network*

EMU photo by Jim Bishop

All that jazz

EMU Jazz & Swing Sisters, a big band and vocal ensemble at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., was to give programs in nine congregations and five schools in New York and Pennsylvania during the school's midsemester break, Feb. 28-March 7. Directed by Steve Sachs, professor of music at EMU, the group specializes in jazz arrangements of hymns, spirituals and swing tunes.

Quilt and innocence

From left, Virgie Wyse, Helen Frey and Kathryn Crossgrove of Lockport Mennonite Church in Stryker, Ohio, spend Feb. 13 quilting at the Adriel Foster Care Office in Archbold, Ohio. The Adriel Auxiliary Quilt will be auctioned Oct. 16 to benefit troubled children. The Mennonite Church began Adriel in 1896 as an orphan's home. Now a Mennonite Health Services affiliate, Adriel provides residential care, counseling services, victim-offender reconciliation and foster-care placement in 26 Ohio counties.

Life is a Caravel

GOSHEN, Ind.—Michael Sherer, director of information technology at Goshen College, has created Caravel, a cutting-edge enterprise Web content management system. After two years in development and testing, the Caravel Project is ready for free download by Mennonite groups at the project's Web site, http://caravelcms.org.

This system allows Mennonite congregations and organizations that cannot afford to hire a Web designer to use Caravel to display their group's information on the Web. This new product allows users to edit from the browser of their PC, Mac or Linux computer and is designed to be intuitive for people familiar with page layout and word processing software.

Organizations who want a hosted Caravel Web site may obtain one through Mennonite.net by emailing info@mennonite.net or calling 888-868-7099.—*Mennonite.net*

Longtime missionaries to Congo die

ELKHART, Ind.—Two former mission workers to Congo died recently. Mary Epp, a career missionary to the Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire), died Jan. 21 in Saskatoon. She was 81. Ruth Esther Roth, who also served in Congo, died unexpectedly Feb. 7 in Fresno, Calif., where she was visiting family. She was 82.

First Mennonite Church of Saskatoon, Epp's home congregation, held a remembrance service Jan. 26, while Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., where Roth was a member, held a memorial service Feb. 14.

Epp arrived in the Belgian Congo in 1959 as a missionary of Congo Inland Mission (now Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission or AIMM) and the General Conference Mennonite Church's Commission on Overseas Mission (COM).

Epp first worked with primary school teachers at Kamayala, then was evacuated from the country with other missionaries because of the turmoil surrounding the country's independence.

She returned in 1961 and taught school in Kinshasa and Nyanga. In 1980, Epp became a professor at the Bible Institute of the Mennonite Church of Congo.

Roth and Earl, her husband, began service with AIMM and COM in 1954. Roth taught school in Nyanga, Ndjoko Punda and Mukedi and welcomed many guests in their home.

Roth is survived by Earl, daughter Yvonne Smith, sons Loren and Mark Roth and four grandsons.—*Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission and Mennonite Church Canada Witness*

Mary Epp

Ruth Roth

Courtesy photo

Teaching peace in Thailand

Ron Claassen left, director of the Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies at Fresno Pacific University, sits with Angkana Boonsit. Claassen and his wife, Roxanne, promoted restorative justice on a Dec. 27-Jan. 10 trip to Thailand. Angkana, a senior official in the national department of probation, studied at CPACS last fall and is earning a doctorate at Thammasat University in Bangkok. She was the first person to do a dissertation on restorative justice in Thailand. She focused her research on domestice violence and explored the relationship of spirituality and peacemaking.

Living Lent in a

We are called to live as saints in a ghoulish world bent on evil.

by Alan Kauffman

Be still, and know that I am God!—Psalm 46:10a

Oxymoron is a term we use to describe a compound word or phrase in which opposite or contradictory ideas are combined, for example: bittersweet, thunderous silence, just war. In TV land, oxymoron may have been best illustrated by Felix and Oscar, The Odd Couple. In Christian funerals, that combination of heartfelt sorrow and matchless joy is a mixture that hardly seems to fit together.

As we move through the calendar, we encounter days lined-up that are oxymoronic. Ghoulish Halloween (Oct. 31) precedes All Saints Day (Nov. 1). The sentimental Auld Lang Syne (Dec. 31) precedes jubilant Jan. 1, which forgets the past and wipes the slate clean for a fresh start. Good Friday (an oxymoron itself) is linked by a solemn Saturday to an exceptionally Good Sunday, Easter.

Lent kicks off with two days as opposite as any. I was only vaguely aware of these two days until I dated and later married a Lutheran. I learned that Tuesday had a variety of aliases: Faus Naught, Shrove Tuesday, Fat Tuesday, Mardi Gras and—my personal favorite—

At times God calls us to live oxymoronic lives as we find ourselves in the world.

Fat Tuesday world

Donut Day. This comes just before Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, which is the season when mortality and sacrifice and many other things we might otherwise ignore are placed squarely in our face or, in some traditions, crossed with ashes on our foreheads.

At times God calls us to live oxymoronic lives as we find ourselves in the world. And in living such opposite or contradictory lives, the world wants us to believe it is full of oxies and we are the morons.

Fresh future: We are called to live as saints in a ghoulish world bent on evil. We are called to creatively envision a new, fresh future in a world stuck in sentimental, predictive patterns of the past. We are called to proclaim, "He is risen!" in a world cast in killing its enemies. And the Lenten season reminds us that at times we are called to live Lent in a Fat Tuesday world.

Psalm 46 is one of many oxymoronic texts in Scripture. The Psalmist describes a world falling apart. All that would seem stable in the world is vanishing before the Psalmist's vision. Even Sept. 11 pales in comparison to what is crumbling to nothingness in Psalm 46.

And in the midst of a convulsing world, the Sons of Korah—a group of temple singers (2 Chronicles 20:19)—speak an oxymoronic word, "Be still." Can you imagine? What we would expect Korah's kids to say is to run out and buy plastic and duct tape and three days worth of anything we might gluttonously imagine we need. Instead the word comes to be still and know that God is still God.

I'm not sure where the Sons of Korah came across this oxymoronic idea, but it sounds like a page from Moses' memoirs. Remember Moses and the children of Israel, trapped against the sea, with the forces of Pharaoh pressing in fast. Panic and mutiny swelled in the ranks, and the word of God came to Moses, "The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to keep still" (Exodus 14:14).

In the mind-numbing urgency of the moment, with every accelerating nerve in their bodies urging them to do something fast, this oxymoronic word of God comes and says in essence, "Be still and know that I am still God."

This "be still" throughout Scripture should come as no surprise to us. It has its origins in the creation account, in a concept called Sabbath. Since the beginning we have been called to stop on a regular basis and be still and remember that God is still God, to fight the urge to be continually doing and proving ourselves and accomplishing and be still.

We are to stop and acknowledge our frailty and God's strength,

- to stop and acknowledge our inconsistencies and God's stability,
- to stop and acknowledge our fallenness and God's amazing grace,
- to stop and acknowledge our mortality and God's eternity,
- to be still and know that God is still God.

It is nearly impossible to do this when we are in a panic or wanting to take matters into our own hands or worrying about tomorrow or frantically scurrying to pack twice as much into today as we did yesterday or play God ourselves. We are more likely to acknowledge God's strength and stability and grace and eternity and that God is able to run this world better than we can if we take the time to be still.

We are more likely to acknowledge God's strength and stability and grace and eternity and that God is able to run this world better than we can if we take the time to be still.

Sometimes the weather or the death of a friend or some other emergency forces us to be still. But most often, it is our choice. The Lenten season on the Christian calendar invites us to make that choice. The world will continue on, living in the Fat Tuesday pace of life, indulging in ongoing Mardi Gras. But we need at points, God said we need at regular intervals, to be still and know that God is still God.

Alan Kauffman is pastor of Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville, Pa.

Lent

REFLECTIONS 1

Learning to let go

Lessons from Somalia about work, time, relationships and possessions

by Kathleen Walker

In January 2003, my 10-year-old daughter and I began a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) assignment in Bossaso, in northern Somalia. That was never my first choice of where to do a short-term assignment. But God shut every other door and left that one wide open. Finally I gave in and agreed to follow God's will, not mine. That beginning should have made it clear that God had much to teach me.

Lent is the season of letting go of all that keeps us from drawing closer to Christ. I have learned to let go of control and independence, busyness, relationships and things. Most of the time God has had to drag me, kicking and screaming, to show me what to learn.

In Somalia I was "lent" to a local organization and assigned to teach in a newly opened nursing school, with the goal of graduating the first trained nurses in Somalia in more than 10 years. But even in relatively safe Bossaso, no one could predict what might happen: Somalia is a country without a central government and has been for many years.

> **Having defined who I was for many years by what I did, I found the lack of things to do threatening.**

Potential dangers: All my life I have valued my independence. As a single woman I have learned to fix clogged drains, drive through the worst snowstorms and make my own decisions. Being in control is important to me. But because of the potential dangers in Bossaso, I was not allowed to walk outside without an escort of one or more strong males. Most of the time I was confined to my house, the office or the school. I found I had to let go of my independence.

I adopted two children as a single parent, but even before those days, I tended to be a workaholic. I carried a full-time teaching load, one or two overloads and worked 20 hours a month at a local home-care agency. On my arrival in Bossaso, I found I would be teaching 16 hours in four weeks, not the 16 hours a day I was used to.

Electric power was limited. So computer usage was limited. With no TV, videos, DVDs and often no light to read by, there was little left to occupy the empty hours. I was aware that MCC wanted me in Bossaso as a "presence for Christ," but having defined who I was for many years by what I did, I found the lack of things to do threatening. I had to learn to trust God to fill the empty hours.

I had asked God to help me be a Christian witness in this country that is 99 percent Muslim. I told him I would need help building relationships: one or two good friends would be necessary, more would be nice. Upon my arrival, I found that, as the only white woman in a city of more than 200,000, I was an object of curiosity. Children often fled when they saw me walking to my house. Building deep relationships was difficult.

God and email: I worked with all men at the school, and in Somali society unrelated men and women don't interact socially. The women at my organization spoke little English and it was just too hard for us to carry on much of a conversation. So, for the first three months, the only relationships I had were with God, my email and my daughter. Then the email refused to function for three weeks, and I had to take my daughter to Nairobi to attend boarding school. Returning to Bossaso alone for the last month, I learned that when it is only God and you, it is enough.

I learned to let go of things. Having been on other mission assignments, I had an idea what I was getting into. I told God before I arrived that I could manage almost anything as long as I had refrigeration. I arrived to find I did not.

More than half the things I brought were useless. When I took my daughter to boarding school, I returned with what I felt were the bare essentials. God had another idea. My backpack did not arrive in Bossaso with me. I was left with the clothes I had on, no tape player, no toothbrush, no flashlight. Worse, I had no way to tell time, since my watch died the morning I left, and my clock was in the backpack. The backpack was found three days later in Congo and did not arrive in Bossaso until 11 days after I did. But I managed without the bare essentials. I learned that God will help me let go of things also.

The lessons I learned in Bossaso are ones I have no doubt needed to learn for some time. Throughout, God was with me, daily upholding me and leading me, comforting me and helping me. God has given me a love for the Somali people and a desire to see them come to Christ. Through this experience I have learned there are many things we can let go of, as long as we never let go of God.

Kathleen Walker returned last August from a six-month MCC term in Somalia. She attends Open Door Baptist Church in Churchville, N.Y.

Crucifixion: Resurrection

Two poems of Sudan

by Annetta Miller

War does not determine
who is right
War determines
who is left—African proverb

The civil war
raging in Sudan
since 1983
(currently the longest
running civil war
in the world)

Two million dead
Millions displaced internally
Hundreds of thousands of refugees
scattered globally

CRUCIFIXION

Intense international and
regional peace initiatives
acknowledged and encouraged
by the Sudanese churches
Promise peace
in Sudan
in 2004

An agreed ceasefire
has ended killing
Displaced
are returning home
Refugees
anticipate a new life

Every war
gives way to peace—African proverb

RESURRECTION

Annetta Miller and Harold, her husband, are Mennonite Central Committee representatives for southern Sudan, based in Nairobi, Kenya. They have lived in Africa for more than three decades.

Break Every Yoke—a Lenten fast for justice and healing in Iraq

Is this what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? This is the kind of fasting I desire: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke. Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your wound will quickly be healed. The ancient ruins will be rebuilt, and the foundations restored.
—Isaiah 58:5-6, 8, 12.

Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) members living and working in Iraq appeal to the worldwide church to join a fast for justice and healing throughout the season of Lent. Thousands of families—in the United States and Iraq—ache for the wounds of war to be healed. It is time to ask for miracles. It is time to empty ourselves and beg for God's mercy and compassion. It is time to proclaim a fast—a "day acceptable to the Lord."

We fast to set the oppressed free and to break the yokes of injustice that keep thousands of Iraqis imprisoned without due process. We fast to become more vulnerable to God's presence as we seek ways to reduce the fear, violence and injustice that imprison all of us. We fast to seek the miracle of forgiveness, peace and healing from all the terrors of war. We invite you to fast with us.

CPT members in Iraq will fast in a variety of ways (liquids-only, Ramadan-style dawn to dusk) and will engage in daily public witness in Baghdad.

For more information, contact CPT, P.O. Box 6508, Chicago, IL 60680, 773-277-0253, guest.903627@MennoLink.org.

A watch of love

Instructions for keeping a vigil of life with a loved one who is dying

by Walter Friesen

As I write, my lifelong friend Herb is dying in Juneau, Alaska. I want to be at his side, keeping watch while he lives his death and enters eternal life. I am at peace about what to say and do; I am eager and excited about the vigil, for I know it will be a wonderful deepening of my own spirit.

I cannot be with Herb, but I have sent my words of affection and blessing by email, and Herb's brother Rick has already read them to Herb in the presence of those gathered round, keeping watch.

Most of us feel unsure and unprepared for the vigil of life. We feel drawn to be present, for we do not want our beloved to die alone. But we also feel we are intruding on holy space and wonder whether we have authority to be present and touch, speak, pray, sing, laugh, cry, remember without permission from the one crossing over. It would be the rare exception for the dying to communicate in their final hours the welcome we might seek.

It is wisest to talk with our loved ones about death, dying, vigils, wakes, funeral arrangements, burials—and especially wills and advance directives—long before the hour of death.

We may feel awkward about who is welcome at the bed in the room. We may feel we cannot be free to speak our hearts because of how it may be understood by others in the room.

And perhaps most difficult, if we haven't talked it through in advance: Does the one dying know she or he is actively dying? Does the dying one know that we know? Reticence to talk about dying may come from denial by any of us. My experience teaches me that the one dying is rarely in denial but may feel shy and unprepared about speaking of death and may feel constrained to try to comfort the loved ones present by avoiding death topics.

For these reasons it is wisest to talk with our loved ones about death, dying, vigils, wakes, funeral arrangements, burials—and especially wills and advance directives—long before the hour of death. These topics should be discussed regularly and periodically all through life and especially when we score another anniversary or when we move into new living arrangements.

But now we return to the vigil of life, the watch of love at the couch of death. If we have been listening and taking notes, we will have a useful folder that includes important life events with dates, places, people; favorite Bible stories or verses; favorite poems and songs; some photos with a story; some life anecdotes; a bit of humor; words of a wall plaque; references to favorite colors, clothes, expressions, gestures, foods, cars, places. These are all wonderful help for the watch of love.

A time of sharing: If you have invited a health worker or clergy person to be present, you might ask this person to formally open the time of sharing. Or if the family agrees to one of their own to lead the way, that works well. The leader comes near, takes the hand of the dying or gently touches the face and, speaking clearly, firmly says, for example: Mother, this is Walt speaking. We are all here around your bed (name those in the room) to give you our blessings, to sing some songs, to read from the Bible, to tell stories, to pray with you and stay with you as you leave your body and enter into your glory. We all believe that tonight (today) you will finish your life. We all rejoice with you. You have run a good race, you have lived a good life. We are here to tell you good-bye and to send you ahead of us with blessing and joy.

Here one of the group might lead in a prayer or you might recite the Lord's Prayer together—particularly if it was one of your traditions. Or you might sing the Doxology or some other prayer song or praise hymn.

Then, one by one, each person takes the hand of the dying, repeats her or his name and speaks words of love, respect, gratitude, blessing, goodwill and release.

After the first round, if there are important loved ones unable to be present and if there is a message from them (in writing or via telephone) those blessings and releases are also clearly given.

When the first round of blessings and releases is finished, there will be some times of silence and times for hymns, poems, Scriptures and especially memories of events and patterns. (Always try to remember to give your name.)

ArtToday, Inc.

If any in the group desires a few minutes of private time, that should be arranged. But in general it is good to share your words in each other's presence, for in this way you build and strengthen the bonds of love and respect.

If any knows of events and disappointments in which forgiveness and blessing have not been spoken, it is important to reach a peace-of-heart place in which you can genuinely say: "All my accounts with you are clean. I feel your forgiveness and blessing in my life. You have been a good (mother, son, etc.) to me and I carry your spirit in me. On my side I can assure you that I have and will forgive every wrong or injustice I have ever felt from you. My account with you is all paid up. You may die in peace with me."

Truthfulness: Also, all should be aware that the dying one dearly wishes to know that his or her loved ones will be well, that their futures are open and joyful. If there are personal spiritual-emotional-physical-relational problems that are known to the dying and to the loved ones gathered, it is helpful to acknowledge and name them and to say what you are doing to overcome those trials. It is not perfection that is needed for release but rather honesty. Indeed it is truthfulness that makes us free.

You might talk about your plans and prospects, about your dreams and hopes. These are all life-signs to share. For the dying those thoughts may be comforting.

Do not underestimate the healing in humor and laughter. The vigil does not have to be somber. On the other hand, you may also feel a need for silent waiting, a time of hushed holiness. Let all the moods of life enter naturally.

And you may sense—from prior conversation about the issue or from the spirit of the moment—that your dying loved one may seek to cross over alone with God. Follow your instincts. We know of a number of our loved ones who seemed to wait until we left the room for a few minutes. This dying alone choice does not mean the watch is inappropriate, that the blessings, assurances, releases and memories were not important. It means the final moment is so holy that we want no distraction. This may be especially true for us who have always felt responsible for everyone in our presence.

Do not underestimate the healing in humor and laughter. The vigil does not have to be somber.

After the last breath, we may gather round and offer tears and prayers of gratitude and relief. We may linger after the nurse or doctor has come to confirm death. Doctors and nurses may want to join us in prayer and rejoicing. And we may want to linger in the room and start planning the memorial-burial events waiting for the mortician to come.

If pastors have not been present during the vigil but are called at this point, it is helpful for one of the family to be given some consensus authority to take the lead in reporting to the clergy and in working with morticians and clergy on arrangements.

Walter Friesen, Newton, Kan., is chaplain at Bethesda Home, Goessel, Kan. This article is adapted from an article in The Bethesda Letter *(Spring).*

A casket and a billfold

by David Gale

As I stepped out of my pickup truck at an interstate rest stop, there on the pavement lay a nice black billfold. Driver's license, credit cards, a few crisp $5 bills. Someone will miss this, I thought. The driver's license showed 21-year-old John K____ from a small town in Kansas. I took the billfold with me to attempt to return it to John K. later.

Soon I was on my way again—into Chicago. My original errand reoccupied my thoughts amid the busy traffic. I was taking a casket I had made to a Chicago funeral home to pick up the body of Michelle. What would a city funeral director think of a simple, home-built casket and our plans to bring her body back to Plow Creek Fellowship for a simple, earthy burial? I felt vulnerable to some unkown criticism from the secret workings of the funeral industry.

Michelle had lived at Plow Creek, in north central Illinois, for about three years, coming from the Jesus People USA community in Chicago. In the fall of 2001 she was diagnosed with terminal cancer. She accepted that diagnosis as God's plan for her and over the next few weeks set about making plans that fit that prognosis. One decision she made was to move back to JPUSA, where she had many friends and her daughter and grandchildren.

As I lay in that hospital bed, I wondered, Will Michelle die before I get that casket built?

She also decided to plan her own funeral, including contacting all her nieces and nephews to be pall bearers. She asked if someone could build her a casket. I felt I was the most likely person at Plow Creek to do this, having modest cabinetry skills, access to a workshop and tools and a flexible schedule. I was leery of this because I had not found Michelle an easy person to relate to. But that did not stop me from accepting her request.

As 2002 dawned, I became sick with a cold that hung on for days and moved into my chest. As breathing became more difficult, Margaret, my wife, drove me to the emergency room. I spent a few days in the hospital with pneumonia. As I lay in that hospital bed, I wondered, Will Michelle die before I get that casket built?

Back home, I thought about how I would build the casket. It needed to look like furniture, not a box, and should reflect Michelle, a feminine person—not me, the masculine designer. A casket needed handles—she said there would be eight pall bearers.

After a few days the plans and the casket came together—a stock piece of oak baseboard around the base and a smaller oak molding at the top. I devised a simple way to make a long handle for each side and short handles for each end from oak boards. Two six-foot pieces of one-by-two with four groups of three blocks between, glued up, run through the thickness planer to even out the glue joints, curve the ends on the band saw, router round over bit on all the edges, then split down the middle to make two long handles. I decided to use a white stain with a coat of varnish on the entire casket.

Michelle was able to see the casket and gave her approval. Time passed—Michelle outlived medical predictions by many months. Patiently she lived and pleasantly greeted her special guests until March 2003.

A friend went with me to get the casket from another friend's basement, where it was stored. We uncovered the casket and carried it to my pickup truck, but to my dismay I saw a change. The varnish coat over the beautiful stain had yellowed, and some of the yellowing was uneven. But there was no time for changes. The next morning I set off on the three-hour trip to Chicago.

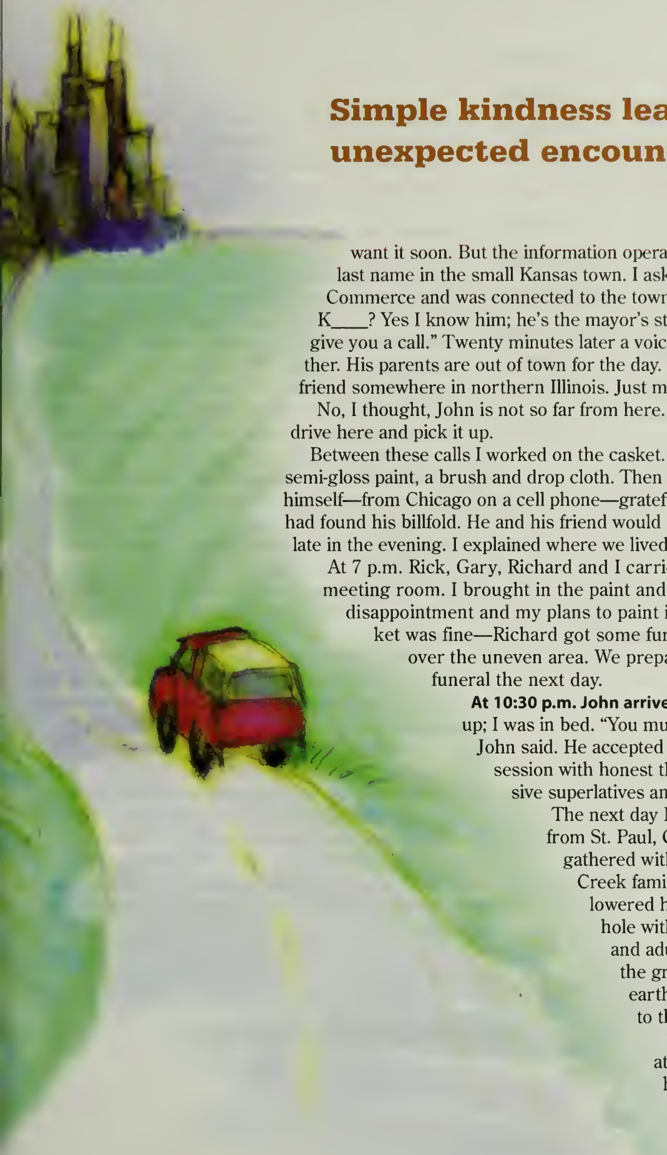
Here I was, on the last part of the trip, feeling vulnerable not only to the secret workings of the funeral industry but unhappy that the casket no longer met my approval.

All was well at the funeral home. In a chapel, Michelle's earthly body was placed in the casket. One of the staff got a screw gun and screwed on the lid—now that's my kind of work. We put the casket back in the truck. I covered it with a furniture blanket, closed the door on the topper and started the trip home.

I decided that the casket would look better just painted white, which I could do that evening, prior to the funeral and burial the next day.

I arrived home at 4 o'clock, just in time to call Kansas. Maybe I could get the billfold in the mail that afternoon; surely John would

Simple kindness leads to some unexpected encounters.



want it soon. But the information operator had no listing for that last name in the small Kansas town. I asked for the Chamber of Commerce and was connected to the town clerk's office. "John K____? Yes I know him; he's the mayor's stepson. I'll have his parents give you a call." Twenty minutes later a voice said: "I'm John's grandfather. His parents are out of town for the day. I know John was visiting his friend somewhere in northern Illinois. Just mail the billfold to me."

No, I thought, John is not so far from here. He'd probably prefer to drive here and pick it up.

Between these calls I worked on the casket. I located a can of off-white semi-gloss paint, a brush and drop cloth. Then another phone call—John himself—from Chicago on a cell phone—grateful that some caring person had found his billfold. He and his friend would be returning from Chicago late in the evening. I explained where we lived.

At 7 p.m. Rick, Gary, Richard and I carried the casket into the meeting room. I brought in the paint and brush and explained my disappointment and my plans to paint it. Others thought the casket was fine—Richard got some furniture wax and rubbed over the uneven area. We prepared the room for the funeral the next day.

At 10:30 p.m. John arrived at our door. Margaret was up; I was in bed. "You must be the wife of the saint," John said. He accepted the return of his lost possession with honest thanks but without submissive superlatives and even laughed at himself.

The next day Michelle's natural family—from St. Paul, Chicago and Colorado—gathered with her JPUSA and Plow Creek family for a simple funeral. We lowered her casket into an earthen hole with manilla ropes. Children and adults took turns shoveling in the grave, returning Michelle's earthly body—and the casket—to the earth.

That evening I looked again at the note John left at our house: "A million thanks for keeping me assured that, during a trying time for American values, there are still great people to be found." Little did he know all the story of the day—that his part added to the whole.

David Gale is a member of Plow Creek Fellowship, a Mennonite intentional community in Tiskilwa, Ill.

A million thanks for keeping me assured that, during a trying time for American values, there are still great people to be found.—John K.

Correction: In "Suggestions for Black History Month" by Freeman Miller (Feb. 3, p. 15), the title *Enter the River* should have read *Set Free*.

Arrested tr

Transformation is at risk because of our attitudes of scarcity.

by Dave Boshart

Transformation is about conversion. Transformation is the act of markedly changing the appearance of something. We have talked about the emergence of a new Mennonite Church as transformation. The emergence of a new Mennonite Church is the work of God. It is often a mystery and at least as often has been mystifying. God is at work transforming our church into a clearer sign of God's reign. We need only pay attention to that transformation, welcome it and fold our energy and resources into the mystery that is emerging. Yet there is risk in the transformation process. The kingdom of God is not at risk, but the transformation of our church is.

> As the priorities of Mennonite Church USA remain underfunded, the church's ability to proclaim that the kingdom of God is at hand is diminished.

In Mark 4:26-29, Jesus says: "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

The kingdom of God emerges mysteriously. We sleep and rise night and day. The kingdom comes, but we do not know how. In truth, the kingdom comes with or without us. The task of the farmer is to be attentive to the emergence of the fruit of the kingdom. When the time is right, the farmer participates in the harvest.

In the parable that follows this passage, Jesus ups the ante by suggesting that we dare not estimate what the crop will yield. For the kingdom of God "is like the mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade" (Mark 4:31-32).

The kingdom of God comes with transforming abundance. It is God's work and it is mystery. As citizens of that kingdom, we wait and watch as the kingdom comes near. When we see it emerging, we proclaim that it is at hand. The privilege of the church is to be like the farmer who sows some seed, watches the mystery of its growth and when it has come to fruition enters the harvest field with great joy.

New dreams: God is doing many exciting things in the church. We are having new visions and dreaming new dreams. We are embracing a new understanding of how we witness to God's work in the world. We are taking seriously the need to call out more leaders. We are striving to abolish racism. We are coming to new understandings about how North American Mennonites relate to our global Anabaptist family. Yet the process of transformation that has birthed a new church into being is now at risk of being arrested, not because the nearness of God's kingdom has been thwarted. Transformation is at risk because our attitudes of scarcity sideline us into being spectators rather than players in the kingdom's emergence.

Attitudes of scarcity threaten to arrest the transformation process God has begun. What does it mean that the wealthiest part of the worldwide Anabaptist church cannot afford to fund its participation in the nearness of the kingdom? The Executive Board and churchwide agencies of Mennonite Church USA are cutting their budgets, piling additional responsibilities onto staff already overworked, drafting more and more volunteers whose best energies are already committed elsewhere, trying to work within the constraints of whatever funds trickle up from conference firstfruit offerings. There is nothing gospel about cutting back, holding back, laying off and giving up on the priorities we believe match the special giftedness and passion of the Mennonite church to the movement of God's Spirit in the world. As the priorities of Mennonite Church USA remain underfunded, the church's ability to proclaim that the kingdom of God is at hand is diminished.

There are two ways to think about funding the work of Mennonite Church USA. One is to settle for the most you can do with whatever funds trickle up from conferences and congregations. When congregational members are considered the church's owners, the scope of mission will be determined by the limits of human realism. The result is an attitude of scarcity that says church ought to be done on the cheap. This view stands in marked contrast to the true transformation that occurs when we believe God is the owner of the church and that the church is the clearest sign of God's reign in the world. We are transformed and our attitudes toward our treasure are transformed as well.

God delights in providing all that is necessary to bring forth the kingdom. When we believe God is the owner of the church, we will ask the missional question, What are the resources we need to join God in bringing the kingdom near? This question is core agenda for executive leadership. Development work, when done with integrity, asks, seeks and knocks in an attempt to name where God is working and to link prospective donors to the joy of bringing forth the kingdom. The development function intends to help people align their treasure with God's purposes. Jesus tells us we should ask, seek and knock to find what we are looking for. Jesus says, "Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone?" (Matthew 7:9).

Mennonites need to let go of the ambivalence toward development and embrace it as core agenda for executive leadership.

God's cupboard: Sometimes we show up at God's table and wonder why there are only crumbs. Sometimes we need to get up from the table and walk to the cupboard and get the bread. God's cupboard is never empty. God desires that we will have all the resources we need to proclaim that the kingdom is at hand, but Jesus reminds us to ask, seek and knock. Asking, seeking and knocking are not magical, mystical pray-and-God-will-bless-you schemes. They are down-to-earth behaviors that enable us to tap into the storehouse of God's limitless resources by inviting people to join their passions to an emerging, transformed reality. Jesus also spoke of the connection between our passions and our treasures. Mennonites need to let go of the ambivalence toward development and embrace it as core agenda for executive leadership.

When we identify the nearness of God's kingdom and believe God is the owner of the church, there will be an urgency to collect all the resources necessary to keep pace with God. What God is doing—growing trees from diminutive seeds—will always be grander than anything our minds can conceive. It will take converted treasures to join God's great plan for Mennonite Church USA.

God will bring the kingdom with or without us. But there is great joy when we are transformed into the new reality that is emerging. Attitudes of scarcity arrest transformation. They are the scourge of the church. When vision is shaped by attitudes of scarcity, we cross a fundamental line and become owners of the church and arbiters of the kingdom's reach. May we be transformed by the renewing of our minds so that we might proclaim God's reign and may we know the joy of walking in the light of God before a watching world.

Dave Boshart is pastor of West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

nsformation

ArtToday, Inc.

I am a conscientious objector to this war

Robert Kreider is a member of Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

In his State of the Nation address in January, a dozen times President Bush spoke of war and 20 times of terror and terrorism. We look about in fear. Out there are enemies waiting to attack us.

I am troubled with this play on our fears. The President has declared a war on terrorism. We are told again and again that we are a righteous nation surrounded by sinister forces out to destroy us. It is a war of we against them: "goodness" versus "badness." Lurking in the shadows are demonic principalities and powers—an "Axis of Evil." To call it war changes society's ground rules. In war, citizens can be mobilized.

Declaring it to be war is to assert control. Citizens conscripted are not in control. The commander in chief is in control. The President knows best. In war a citizen is to be obedient. To question authority is to be disobedient. In this climate of fear to ask hard questions is to put one's status at risk. To challenge command is unpatriotic—perhaps, even worse, treason.

In war rules of fair play are set aside. Civil rights can be ignored. Suspected people are imprisoned without charges or counsel. The commander knows best. The President controls what information is to be shared. Believing official statements demonstrates loyalty; disbelieving is a sign of disloyalty. A nation on a war footing imposes a flood of new rules.

To fall in line is to be patriotic. We are told to rally around our nation's leaders and trust their orders. This is war, not a time for the niceties of civil liberties. Because the enemy may be anywhere, leaders must be secretive. We must be on guard. Where will terrorists strike next? We are silenced, intimidated: "If you are not with us, you are with them, the terrorists." We are being frightened into servility. Fear is abroad in the land.

I am a conscientious objector to the President's "war on terrorism." I refuse to be drafted. For us, who are followers of Christ, let this be a time of alternative service—a time to love our enemies, be hospitable, be patient.

All this is so wrong.

As God's children we live not by fear but by faith, hope and love. In a dangerous world we are not to be afraid. In the birth of Jesus we hear words from on high: "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people." We take comfort in the words of the Psalmist, "I fear no evil; for you are with me." Jesus reassures us: "Do not be afraid, little flock."

Followers of Christ are called to be obedient to the Lord. In him we live beyond fear.

I am a conscientious objector to the President's "war on terrorism." I refuse to be drafted. For us, who are followers of Christ, let this be a time of alternative service—a time to shed fear, love our enemies, be hospitable, be patient, befriend the despised, seek the facts, declare the truth, be prudent, be vigilant, use our wits, contain our anger, build bridges, hope.

This is a time to be contrite. As Christians we know that evil surrounds and lurks within us. We hear the prayer our Lord taught us to pray, "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us." This nation fails to understand the pervasiveness and stubbornness of evil among us and within us. This nation fails to confess its own complicity in the evil that generates terrorism. Terrorism is broadly rooted in the frustrations and hurts of the alienated. Terrorists will not be eradicated with the ways of warfare: missiles and bombs, torture and assassination. Such things beget more terrorists.

Terrorists are criminals. Even criminals are children of God and carry promise of redemption. Those in authority should be encouraged to address terrorist acts as crimes—terrible crimes against humanity—calling for prudent and diligent actions based on understanding of human pathology and sin. This is no time to abandon the time-honored ways of law, courts and international collaboration.

As a conscientious objector to a war on terrorism, I refuse to be victimized by fear. I cling to hope that there are wiser ways of addressing the evil of terrorism than with the weapons of war. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6).

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Music in the church**—Heidi Regier Kreider
- **Messiah revisited**—Glenn Lehman
- **Tuning the piano**—Jean Janzen

Leaders offer apology to MPH retirees

Former MPH board decided to stop Medicare supplement payments in 2001.

There is no way to alleviate all the pain that retirees from the former Mennonite Publishing House (MPH) have felt in the transition that led to Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN). But the Joint Executive Committee (JEC) of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada has taken steps to show it cares about retirees, whose supplemental health benefits were cut due to the financial struggles of the joint publishing ministry.

David Hostetler

Duane Oswald

Henry Krause

Ervin Stutzman

JEC recently sent a letter to the retirees acknowledging that JEC did not do enough soon enough to help their denominations understand the costs the retirees suffered emotionally and financially. The letter confessed this wrong and offered to continue to make the retirees' needs better known. The two denominations are inviting their constituents to continue to give financially to the retirees, even though formal appeals for the MPN Barn Raising Campaign ended in December 2003.

In January 2001 the former MPH board decided the financially troubled publishing agency would stop monthly payments toward retirees' supplemental Medicare insurance policies. Compounding this loss was the loss of respect retirees felt in how they heard of this decision.

"Many of us were trying to understand what was happening, but there wasn't enough information available to clarify the situation," says retiree David E. Hostetler of Scottdale, Pa., who worked for MPH for 19 years, serving as editor for *Purpose* and news editor of *Christian Living* and the *Gospel Herald*.

The JEC acknowledges that it didn't take its share of the responsibility in responding quickly enough to the matter, says Duane Oswald, JEC member and moderator for Mennonite Church USA.

"The retirees felt they hadn't gotten the full recognition that they should have from us, and they were right," he says.

Henry Krause, moderator of Mennonite Church Canada and pastor of Langley (B.C.) Mennonite Fellowship, says, "We wanted to convey that we understood the retirees' concerns and to show that we care and want their situation to have a just end."

The letter, signed by Oswald, Krause and Ervin Stutzman, past moderator of Mennonite Church USA, also thanked the retirees for their long-suffering during their time of stress and transition.

"As the current and past moderators of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada, we wish to thank you for your sacrificial service to MPH," the letter stated.

Stutzman, dean at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va., says he heard more directly about the retirees' pain when a retiree attended a Sunday school class he taught.

Payments stopped: The retirees' plight began when the former board decided to stop monthly payments on their benefits. MPH paid only about half as much as other church agencies toward the cost of medical benefits during an employee's working years. So it was a long-standing policy to continue to help with supplemental medical insurance costs for those who worked to retirement.

The former MPH board made the decision to discontinue those benefits at a time when MPH experienced financial losses and was not willing to list this $1.3 million actuarial liability on its FYE 2001 audit sheet. These factors led 72 of the affected retirees to ask Nelson Waybill, retired personnel director, to chair a committee to activate the grievance procedure. This resulted in the appointment of a mediation committee to make a recommendation to the denominations.

In March 2002, the publishing enterprise stood at the brink of bankruptcy. In a meeting with representatives of MPH, the JEC decided to set aside the MPH board and take control of the publishing business. At the same meeting, the mediation committee presented its recommendations regarding the supplemental health benefits and said that because of the financial situation at MPH the general church should assume responsibility for the cost of the lost benefit.

Although distracted by the financial realities at MPH, the JEC set up a fund for those who wished to contribute toward the costs. In a letter published by *The Mennonite* on Oct. 7, 2003, the MPH Retired Employees Committee said by that time they had received enough funds "to allow a distribution equal to the cost of one quarter of one year's supplemental Medicare coverage."

Those who wish to contribute may send a donation to Mennonite Church USA earmarked as "Retiree Supplemental Benefits." For more information call Mennonite Church USA at 866-866-2872. *—Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

> Many of us were trying to understand what was happening, but there wasn't enough information available to clarify the situation.
> —David Hostetler

For more information about the reorganization of MPH, see the Sept. 3, 2002, issue of *The Mennonite*; it is available at www.TheMennonite.org. Click on "Back Issues."

MMA president Howard Brenneman answers Executive Board questions Jan. 30. Behind Brenneman (left to right) is former MMA board chair Bruce Harder, Mennonite Church USA moderator-elect Roy Williams and Executive Board member Sharon Waltner. Sheldon Burkhalter, a Pacific Northwest Conference conference minister, is behind Waltner.

Everett J. Thomas

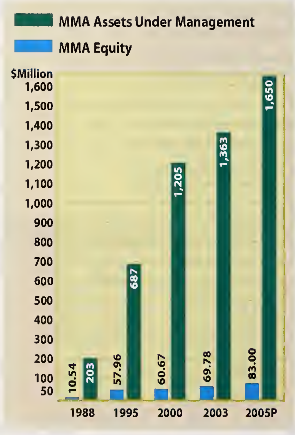
Executive Board reviews MMA activity

MMA leaders say they need strong Anabaptist affinity to sell their products.

How can an organization that manages assets worth $1.3 billion and employs 245 be held accountable to Mennonite Church USA? How can a board of 20 people in two hours effectively review a complex organization that encompasses a dozen different corporations? By asking the bottom-line question, What is the ultimate purpose of MMA Stewardship Agency?

During their Jan. 29-31 meetings in Portland, Ore., Mennonite Church USA Executive Board members listened to reports from MMA's leaders and quizzed them about their organization's ends statement, "The purpose of MMA is to empower the Anabaptist faith community to practice the biblical stewardship of all God's gifts."

Some Executive Board members asked whether such a purpose for the denomination's mutual aid and stewardship agency was sufficient for a missional church orientation.



"So what if Anabaptists are empowered [to be good stewards]," asked Ervin Stutzman, former Mennonite Church USA moderator. "Is it enough to be good stewards? What about the people who are touched by our stewardship?"

Board member Daryl Byler also wanted to know for whom church members practiced good stewardship and said, "Delegates to Atlanta [2003 Delegate Assembly] were quite strong that our stewardship should be for more than the Anabaptist community."

By the conclusion of the review, MMA leaders and Executive Board members agreed that MMA's ends statement fit within the more global statement about stewardship adopted by the denomination and that there was more to stewardship in the church than what MMA could carry. The denominational statement says, "Holistic biblical stewardship of all God's gifts is practiced among us for the benefit of all those whose lives we touch."

Margin for mission: In its written report, MMA said it needs substantial equity, called "margin for mission," so it can meet regulatory requirements, develop new products and "tithe each year for charitable purposes." But the extraordinary success of MMA's programs—total equity reached nearly $70 million by the end of 2003—also sparked discussion about whether such a large agency needs the denomination. In the last 15 years MMA has increased its assets under management from $203 million to $1.363 billion (see chart).

"When Mennonite Church USA was first created," said former MMA board chair Bruce Harder, Portland, Ore., "MMA was the first agency that said it wanted to be part of [the new denomination]." Current board chair Carol Sutter, Kansas City, Mo., said MMA needs formal accountability to Mennonite Church USA in order to preserve its national charter as a tax-exempt fraternal organization—the only remaining fraternal in the United States to offer health insurance.

Sutter also said MMA needs a strong Mennonite Church USA to continue selling its products.

"The Anabaptist affinity [for MMA's customers] is absolutely essential for the sale of products," said Sutter. "So the life and vitality of the church is very important to MMA."

The Executive Board reviews one churchwide agency each year. Mennonite Education Agency will be reviewed next January.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Reformed Church offers reconciliation

Felix Manz memorial will be placed at site of Limmat River drowning.

An official ceremony of reconciliation between leaders of the Reformed Church in Zurich, Switzerland, and Anabaptist descendants from around the world will take place in Zurich this summer.

For six months, beginning in March, the Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Zurich will commemorate the 500th anniversary of Heinrich Bullinger, one of the fathers of the Reformed Church. On June 26 they will also honor Felix Manz, a founder of the Anabaptist movement, in a special ceremony. As a part of this ceremony, a memorial to Manz will be unveiled and placed on the bank of the Limmat River where Manz was drowned in 1527 for his Anabaptist convictions.

Recently, officials of the Reformed Church in Zurich have expressed a desire to acknowledge their "shadow side," including 16th- and 17th-century persecution and execution of Anabaptists.

"The Reformation started as a movement of renewal but immediately turned out to become a story of separations," said Peter Dettwiler, ecumenical officer of the Evangelical Reformed Church in Zurich. "It's time to set a memorial in the city of Zurich where the roots of both the Reformed and the Anabaptists are to be found."

The Reformed Church has invited 100 North American representatives to join in this ceremony of past acknowledgement and future hope. These individuals are to include Amish and Hutterites as well as other spiritual descendants of Anabaptists. In addition, Larry Miller of Mennonite World Conference is coordinating the broader participation by the worldwide Mennonite and Brethren in Christ community. Swiss Mennonites are playing an important role in the planning.

John Sharp, director of the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee and Archives, is coordinating North American participation in the commemoration. Sharp became involved in planning this event by chance last June. John Zook, Sharp's relative who frequently flies to Switzerland as an airline pilot, gave Sharp's name to Elisabeth Lutz, a friend in Zurich. Both Lutz and Zook were involved in negotiating the approval and placement of the Manz marker. Sharp traveled to Zurich to participate in the discussions and also met with officials of the Evangelical Reformed Church for conversation on the proposed conference.

While this will be a historic commemoration, it is not an isolated event, Sharp said. Similar discussions have taken place in the past. In 1983, MWC participated in a discussion with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches followed by a public service of confession for injustice during the Reformation.

"These conversations seem to be part of an emerging ecumenical impulse toward reconciliation," Sharp said. "The challenge is to engage in serious discussions of core commitments so that ceremonies like this one have integrity."

This will be the largest gathering of officials and members of the Reformed Church of the Canton of Zurich and Anabaptist descendants, Sharp said.

In addition, the memorial to Manz will be unveiled and placed on the bank of the Limmat River at the place of his execution.—*Kendra King is a communications intern for Mennonite Church USA News Service*

> The challenge is to engage in serious discussions of core commitments so that ceremonies like this one have integrity.
> —John Sharp

EMU makes it official

Loren E. Swartzendruber will be officially inaugurated March 27 as president of Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. The inauguration will take place three months after Swartzendruber took office on Jan. 1 as EMU's eighth president. Swartzendruber most recently served as president of Hesston (Kan.) College and now returns to his alma mater, having graduated from EMU in 1976 with a Bachelor of Arts degree and from Eastern Mennonite Seminary with a Master of Divinity degree in 1979. He received a doctor of ministry degree from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2000. Prior to serving at Hesston College, he served for 10 years as associate executive secretary of the former Mennonite Board of Education.—*Jim Bishop of EMU News Service*

EMU News Service

Africa 2003 finances end in the black

Paraguay, eastern Pennsylvania send invitations for Assembly 15 in 2009

Mennnonite World Conference continues to stand in solidarity with the Brethren in Christ Church (BICC) in Zimbabwe and to engage in "sharing gifts in suffering and in joy," the Assembly 14 theme. MWC officers and executive staff met in Akron, Pa., Jan. 15-18 to follow up on events and actions since Africa 2003 in Bulawayo last August and to lay plans for the next five years, including the assembly in 2009.

MWC finances at the end of 2003 showed a positive Assembly Fund balance of $47,000 despite challenging projections two years ago. European and North American registrations—which are charged higher fees—were good, special contributions for Africa 2003 were strong and costs were carefully controlled. While inflation soared through the roof and the value of Zimbabwean currency plunged to unprecedented lows creating economic chaos and a budgeting nightmare, those combined factors left the bottom line on the international budget virtually unchanged. Travel and operating funds also ended with positive balances.

The Assembly Fund balance will remain in the Assembly Fund to finance future assemblies, including a feasibility study on the location of Assembly 15 in 2009.

MWC has received invitations for Assembly 15 from MWC-member churches in Paraguay to hold the assembly in that country and from the United States to come to eastern Pennsylvania. Staff and officers at the Akron meeting confirmed that Larry Miller and Ray Brubacher would do feasibility studies of both locations and bring a recommendation in favor of one to the July 28-Aug. 4 executive committee meeting in Strasbourg, France.

During Assembly 14 in Zimbabwe, the General Council issued a statement committing MWC to prayer and to join the BICC in monitoring social and political developments in the country. Since then, the BICC has created a Peace and Justice Committee chaired by Danisa Ndlovu, bishop of the BICC in Zimbabwe and vice president of MWC. This committee is networking with BIC churches and groups within Zimbabwe as well as connecting with the global church.—*Ferne Burkhardt of MWC News Service*

Good Enterprises rewards creditors

Best-selling cookbooks drive publishing income to $12 million per year.

Good Enterprises, Ltd., Intercourse, Pa., completed the repayment of its creditors on Jan. 26. In addition to paying back creditors 100 percent of what was owed in a Chapter 11 reorganization, the company paid an additional bonus of either 50 percent or 25 percent depending on how creditors had signed up. Good Enterprises, Ltd. is the parent company of Good Books, The Old Country Store and The People's Place.

It's been a long, hard trek, but we were able to complete our plan of reorganization in about half the time that was allocated for it.—Merle Good

"We're delighted that we've been able to reach our goal," says Merle Good, president of the company. "It's been a long, hard trek, but we were able to complete our plan of reorganization in about half the time that was allocated for it. We sincerely regret the difficulty and uncertainty which this experience has brought to so many persons. But we're delighted that it has ended so well."

Phyllis Pellman Good and Merle Good

Good Enterprises, Ltd. paid off a total of $9,763,609 to complete its obligations. Obligations included all pre-petition taxes, bank obligations, real estate mortgage and fees for lawyers in addition to the $6,229,031 in claims, plus the $1,828,305 in bonuses above the 100 percent repayments.

"We appreciate so deeply those creditors who had cool heads and enough goodwill and faith to stand with us in spite of our failure, to permit the company to be reorganized," says Phyllis Pellman Good, co-executive director of the company with her husband. "We're glad we didn't give up."

The company that emerges from the reorganization is considerably stronger than the one that went into Chapter 11. Publishing sales are more than ten times what they were before the company's reorganization (with a staff half the size of the earlier one). Two national best-selling cookbooks, *Fix-It and Forget-It Cookbook* and its sequel, *Fix-It and Forget-It Recipes for Entertaining*, have sold more than 4 million copies. Sales for the publishing house the past two years exceeded $12 million per year. Good Enterprises, Ltd. has now been returned to its shareholders. The company was founded by the Goods and several others in 1970.

"It's not an experience I would recommend to anyone," Good says, "but we're glad it's over, and with such happy results."

MCC workers in Haiti safe so far

Work continues in spite of roadblocks and daily demonstrations.

As political turmoil mounted in Haiti, Mennonite Central Committee workers gathered in Port-au-Prince on Feb. 23 to assess the situation. However, some MCC workers who live and work in the southern part of the country arrived at the previously scheduled team meeting in Port-au-Prince unaware of the situation. While U.S. news reports made it sound like the entire country was in chaos, nearly all of MCC's workers—35 adults plus seven children—live in areas where there had been no violence.

Tension has been on the rise in the Caribbean nation since 2000, when the ruling Lavalas party swept disputed parliamentary elections. Protests have turned deadly in the past few months as opposition party members—demanding that President Jean-Bertrand Aristide resign—clash with government supporters.

"Roadblocks curtail our activities, and demonstrations change our routes, but overall MCC's work continues," reports MCC Haiti co-representative Edwin Dening.

MCC's workers serve in reforestation, health, education and water projects as well as human rights work. In addition to the Dening family, five MCC workers live in Port-au-Prince.

Through her assignment with a Haitian human rights organization, MCC worker Kristi Vandewetering is supporting efforts to keep protests peaceful. The organization has monitored nearly all the recent demonstrations in Port-au-Prince and provides emergency evacuation services for victims of violence. Vandewetering recently helped transport student protesters being threatened with violence to another area of the city for safety.

The demonstrations have become a near-daily occurrence.

"Just yesterday there was a big (some say over 100,000 people) march on the streets calling for the president to step down," says Dening. He and his family had to search for alternate routes home from church to avoid the volatile demonstration crowds.

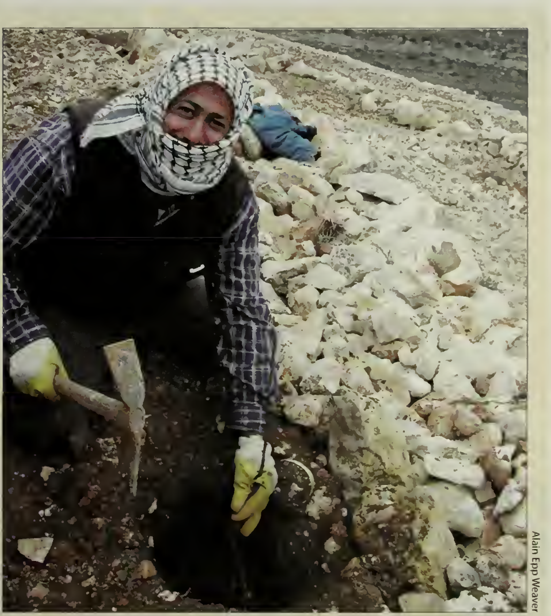
Even MCC workers in Bwadlorens, a remote village in the northeast, have felt the effects of the situation. High-school students, who must attend a boarding school in a nearby town, have returned to the village; their classes never resumed after Christmas break due to the political unrest.

"Rumors abound at a time like this," Dening says and have included talk of troops from neighboring countries intervening, or even a civil war.

Aristide recently returned from Kingston, Jamaica, where he sought solutions to the crisis with several Caribbean-nation leaders as well as representatives from the Organization of American States, the European Union, Canada and the United States.

Opposition leaders met with officials from CARICOM, a pan-Caribbean organization, in early February but refuse to meet with Aristide himself, saying they will be satisfied with nothing less than his resignation.

The Dominican Republic, which along with Haiti makes up the island of Hispaniola, has also been plagued with unrelated demonstrations and strikes due to political scandals and a plummeting currency. Thousands of Haitians live and work in the Dominican Republic where the economic situation has long been brighter.—*Rachel B. Miller Moreland for MCC Communications.*



Alain Epp Weaver

MCC helps with land cultivation

Mennonite Central Committee and the Union of Agricultural Work Committees have been assisting 21 Palestinian farmers in the southern West Bank city of Halhul to prepare their land for cultivation and to plant fruit and nut trees. Farming families were chosen for the project based on their willingness to commit labor and their limited resources to cultivating 30 acres of stony ground, building retaining walls to prevent soil erosion and digging cisterns to collect rainwater. The farmers, all at or below poverty level, already owned this land but did not have the economic resources to prepare it for cultivation on their own. MCC funding helped pay for bulldozer work and for seedlings. In late January, farmers began planting the newly cultivated land with more than 5,000 fruit and nut seedlings.

"This project represents a real step toward financial security for us," Ashraf al-Masri said. Ya'quob al-Masri (photo at left) jointly owns some of the land he is cultivating with his brother Ashraf al-Masri.—*MCC News Service*

Spring to arrive March 10 in Goshen, Ind.

SAPs measure weight of winter against weight of spring in official maple tree.

Joel Fath

Sasha Dyck (center) and a concerned groundhog listen as Goshen, Ind., mayor Allan Kauffman (left) announces the date of spring as predicted by the college's Sapometer.

With several feet of snow on the ground and temperatures near zero, winter looked like it was here to stay in Goshen, Ind., in mid-February. But come March 10, spring and sun will arrive in Goshen, complete with college students—and maybe a few professors—in shorts.

Goshen College's Scientists/Scholars Advocating Precision (SAPs) gathered on Feb. 16 around the Official Maple Tree of Goshen on campus to predict the scientifically derived first day of spring for the fifth year in a row. The SAPs used a specially designed Sapometer to weigh the strength of winter (a bucket with a stuffed groundhog surrounded by ice) against the strength of spring. The bucket included a sample of the maple sap collected since Feb. 2.

As head SAPs Sasha Dyck, a senior from Montreal, and Kelcie Glick, a junior from Glenwood, N.M., placed buckets on the apparatus, more than 150 students, faculty and staff watched as the Sapometer scales tipped to March 10.

The scientifically based prediction was nearly interrupted, however, by the appearance of a large groundhog (played by senior theater major Ben Friesen, Goshen) with a picket sign that said, "Support your local groundhog."

The groundhog claimed that the SAPs were taking away his one day of work each year. But the SAPs, using reconciliation skills taught by the college, encouraged the groundhog to see that they have ancestors in common. They explained that Groundhog Day originated among the Pennsylvania Dutch and that Goshen College's Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition includes the Pennsylvania Dutch. Dyck then welcomed the groundhog to join their efforts and promised him at least two days of work a year.

After the groundhog agreed to help out, Goshen Mayor Allan Kauffman proclaimed that the city of Goshen would recognize March 10 as the official first day of spring within the city limits.

"I hereby give my official permission—to whatever extent it is determined that such permission is worth a whit—to Goshen residents to wear shorts on said day as they go about their normal routines," Kauffman declared.

A Goshen College men's choir then sang about the demise of groundhogs, and attendees ate donuts with maple icing as Goshen President Shirley H. Showalter, Kauffman and the pacified groundhog sat down to a breakfast of pancakes with maple syrup in celebration of the upcoming spring.

Kauffman, who received his natural science degree from Goshen College in 1970, said his confidence in the SAPs far outweighed any shadowy superstitions associated with small-brained, ground-dwelling creatures, and he challenged the mayor of Punxsutawney, Pa., to reconsider his reliance on a rodent for the prediction of spring's arrival.

SAP Day predictions began in 2000, and that year was amazingly precise: The newly invented "Sapometer" pointed to Feb. 29 as the first day of spring—a day on which the National Weather Service announced record high temperatures of 67 degrees in nearby South Bend. SAP victories over the groundhog have not been as decisive and clearcut since then.—*Jodie H. Beyeler of Goshen College News Service*

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Single parent sends seven to college

Mother: "My children's most important goal is to serve Christ."

The Waldron family of Elida, Ohio, will soon graduate its seventh and youngest child from Bluffton (Ohio) College. All the children have been 18 or younger when they received their degrees.

The youngest sibling, Nathaniel, went through college in three years; he will have just turned 17 when he graduates in May. A music major, he is performing both his junior and senior recitals this academic year. The whole family gathered for Nathaniel's junior recital in Yoder Recital Hall in November.

"It was quite a sight," says Lee Snyder, president of Bluffton College. "This is truly an astonishing family."

Adding to the astonishment is the fact that a single mother put all the children through college. She is Laura Waldron, who also works full-time as a family physician at Luke Medical Center in Elida. The family attends Sharon Mennonite Church, a conservative, unaffiliated congregation that operates a K-12 school. The children in the school proceed at an individual pace, using a curriculum geared to home-schoolers. Most of the students graduate before the traditional age of 18. The Waldron children finished as young as 13.

Waldron required that each of her children learn to play the piano and/or a stringed instrument.

"It's good discipline and it brings the family together," she says. "Their performances became well-known on the nursing-home circuit."

So what do you do when your children are ready for college at such a young age? Waldron looked for a high-quality school that was financially reasonable and within commuting distance. Bluffton College seemed to fit the bill. After the first sibling enrolled and had a good experience, all the others followed.

"Bluffton offers a fine liberal arts education, providing a good basis for future graduate studies," Waldron says. "My children didn't have a clear notion of what they wanted to do in the future, and Bluffton helped them decide, allowing them to sample a variety of subjects."

And what about the children's emotional maturity compared to their older classmates?

"Quite often the Waldron children were more mature than the others," says Lucia Unrau, professor of music. "The mother has done a remarkable job of raising well-adjusted children."

The oldest sons, Vincent John, '93, and Matthew, '95, are physicians in a family group practice in Paoli, Ind. They attended medical school at Wright State University and Medical College of Ohio, respectively. The oldest daughter, Mary Elizabeth (Molly), '94, earned a master's degree in music at Wright State University and now teaches music at Hartville (Ohio) Christian School. Faith, '00, with a master's degree in biology from Bowling Green State University, teaches part-time at a community college in Knoxville, Tenn., and is involved in volunteer work. Amy, '02, is a graduate student in physics at Indiana University, where she is a teaching assistant with undergraduate students who are older than she. Andrew, '04, a double major in chemistry and computer science, plans to enter doctoral studies in either computer science or electrical engineering. Future plans for Nathaniel, '04 are uncertain.

Lucia Unrau

The Waldron family at Nathaniel's music recital at Bluffton College (left to right): Vincent John, Faith, Nathaniel, Laura, Andrew, Mary (Molly), Matthew and Amy

Academic achievement and career success are not the most important things in life, however, for the Waldrons.

"My children's most important goal is to serve Christ," says Waldron.—*Steve Shenk of Bluffton College News Service*

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WORKERS

DeLeon, Seferina Garcia, was ordained Jan. 25 as pastor at Iglesia Menonita del Buen Pastor, Goshen, Ind.

Ebersole, Phil, was installed Jan. 18 as pastor of Peace Mennonite Community Church, Aurora, Colo.

Riegsecker, Marilyn, was licensed Feb. 8 as Minister of Christian Education at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Ruffin, Jimmie, was ordained Feb. 8 as pastor at Fairhaven Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Sosa-Granados, Rolando, was ordained Jan. 25 as pastor at Iglesia Menonita del Buen Pastor, Goshen, Ind.

Vielman, Jorge, was ordained Jan. 25 as pastor at Iglesia Menonita del Buen Pastor, Goshen, Ind.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Blackburn, Sara Jane, Oct. 11, to Mike and Jane Musser Blackburn, Harrisonburg, Va.

Clark, Lilly Christine, Jan. 20, to Kevin and Lisa Mineart Clark, Wayland, Iowa.

Cleary, Cameron Nicole, Sept. 29, to Chuck and Kelly Schmidt Cleary, Wichita, Kan.

Coblentz, Jacob Scott, Dec. 20, received for adoption Dec. 20 by Chris and Sue Schmucker Coblentz, Macedonia, Ohio.

Dare, Owen Michael, Feb. 4, to Mike and Lisa Litwiller Dare, Hopedale, Ill.

Dyck, Matthew Steven, Jan. 20, to Ted and Lesley Rutt Dyck, Elkhart, Ind.

Graber, Andrew Roman, Jan. 2, 2003, received for adoption Oct. 7 by Terry and DeLane Miller Graber, Goshen, Ind.

Huffman, Austin Taylor, Feb. 6, to Chris Huffman and Shannon Beall, Harrisonburg, Va.

Krehbiel, Jacob Lee, June 13, to Michael and Susanne Morris Krehbiel, Wichita, Kan.

Long, Lucinda Clare, Jan. 23, to Matthew (Skip) and Andrea A. Long, Raleigh, N.C.

Longacre, Lydia Jean and Benjamin Henry (twins), Jan. 9, to William and Catharine Longacre, Quakertown, Pa.

Lothian, Grace Maya, Oct. 22, to Dean and Jennifer Patterson Lothian, Bronx, N.Y.

McGowen, Faith Marie, Jan. 12, to Mike and Jen McGowen, Lancaster, Pa.

Miller, Alexa Marie, Dec. 31, to Sam and Lisa Miller, Arthur, Ill.

Morris, Trey Allen, Feb. 4, to Steven and Sharon Faul Morris, Hutchinson, Kan.

Oberholtzer, Katherine Rose, Jan. 31, to Tom and Denise Esbenshade Oberholtzer, Penn Laird, Va.

Osborne, Samantha Jean, June 20, to Craig and Deanna DiGrande Osborne, Truckee, Calif.

Pankratz, Abraham Matthew, July 19, to Matt and Michelle Roth Pankratz, Wichita, Kan.

Pankratz-Hallacy, Ronan Christopher, July 12, to Tim and Rachel Pankratz Hallacy, Wichita, Kan.

Sensenig, Isaac Maliki, July 5, 2003, received for adoption by Ryan and Donna Shenk Sensenig, Nanyuki, Kenya.

Sensenig, Mara Akeyla, July 2, 2003, received for adoption by Ryan and Donna Shenk Sensenig, Nanyuki, Kenya.

Wood, Amy and Dustin (twins), Jan. 4, to Dion and Pam McWhorter Wood, Perryton, Texas.

MARRIAGES

Armstrong/Wolferd: Dwayne Armstrong, Waynesboro, Va., and Patty Wolferd, Charlottesville, Va., Dec. 31 at a private home in Staunton, Va.

Bailey/Conrad: Jace Bailey, Riverside, Iowa, and Kendra Conrad, Wayland, Iowa, Dec. 31 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Eslinger/Vander Molen: Marcie Eslinger, Millersburg, Ind., and Randi Vander Molen, Goshen, Ind., Jan. 3 at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Schmidt/Schrag: Tina Schmidt, Goessel, Kan., and Ben Schrag, Normal, Ill., Oct. 25 at Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel.

DEATHS

Bare, Earl S., 87, New Holland, Pa., died Jan. 17 of cancer. Spouse: (1st) Suetta Dillman Bare (deceased), (2nd) Evelyn Leaman Bare. Parents: Martin R. and Mamie Shreiner Bare. Child: Richard; two grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 21 at Stumptown Mennonite Church, Bird-In-Hand, Pa.

Birkey, Ellis, 90, Fisher, Ill., died Dec. 26 of cancer. Spouse: Wilma Birkey. Parents: Alvin R. and Amelia Birkey. Children: Pat Heiser, Larry; three grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 30 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher.

Birkey, Wilma Hedrick, 89, Fisher, Ill., died Dec. 31. Spouse: Ellis Birkey (deceased). Parents: Hugh and Nola Hedrick. Children: Pat Heiser, Larry; three grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 3 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher.

Bowers, William Lyman, 89, Mifflintown, Pa., died Jan. 13. Spouse: Mary E. Brubaker Bowers. Parents: Harvey and Harriet Shirk Bowers. Children: Ronald, Barbara Zook, Richard; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 16 at Guss Funeral Home, Mifflintown.

Brockmueller, Samuel W., 94, Freeman, S.D., died Jan. 15. Spouse: (1st) Kathryn Albrecht (deceased), (2nd) Annie L. Hofer (deceased). Parents: Wm. F. and Mary Preheim Brockmueller. Children: Percy, Blanche Tschetter, Rudy; step-children Angeline Mendel, Norman Hofer, Paul E. Hofer; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 19 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Entz, A. Marie Regier, 81, Newton, Kan., died Jan. 26. Spouse: Gus Entz. Parents: Gustav and Anna Regier. Children: LaVern Buller, Carol Lind, Judith Peters; nine grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 30 at First Mennonite Church, Newton.

Gahman, Monroe T., 77, Pipersville, Pa., died Jan. 29. Spouse: Ruth W. Gahman. Parents: Abram S. and Hannah T. Gahman. Children: Pat Bolton, James, Eva Yoder, Wilber, Duane: 11 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 2 at Deep Run Mennonite Church East, Perkasie, Pa.

Goering, Herbert D., 80, Newton, Kan., died Jan. 14. Spouse: Dorothea Regier Goering. Parents: John B. and Jesse Schrag Goering. Children: Constance Gehring, Roberta Anderson, David, Charles, Loren; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 18 at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Goertz, Fritz, 75, Archbold, Ohio, died Jan. 25 of cancer. Spouse: Ursula Goertz. Parents: Gustav and Elisabeth Goertz. Children: Ilse-Marie, Juergen, Mark; four grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 29 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Graber, Mabel M., 94, Freeman, S.D., died Jan. 21. Spouse: Albert A. Graber (deceased). Parents: John C. and Maria Miller Gering. Children: DeWayne, Terry, Sharon Koerner; three grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 24 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Hall, Alvina Unruh, 86, Wichita, Kan., died Jan. 18. Spouse: (1st) Ray Gillmore (deceased), (2nd) Ira R. Hall. Parents: John S. and Maria Ewert Unruh. Children: Glen, Donald, Marlin; 10 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 21 at Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, Kan.

Helmuth, Andy J., 83, Sarasota, Fla., died Jan. 15. Spouse: Lizzie Ann Helmuth. Parents: Jacob and Ann Mast Helmuth. Child: Larry; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 19 at Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Hostetler, Geraldine Grim, 80, Phoenix, Ariz., died Jan. 27. Spouse: David Hostetler. Parents: Howard and Celia Warstler Grim. Children: Kathryn Reinford, Donna Edwards, Don; seven grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 31 at Trinity Mennonite Church, Glendale, Ariz.

Liechty, Irene Betty Rupp, 75, Grabill, Ind., died Jan. 22. Spouse: Clifford Liechty. Parents: Sylvan and Pearl Frey Rupp. Children: Jon, Jim, Jerry, Joy Yoder; seven grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 26 at North Leo Mennonite Church, Leo-Cedarville, Ind.

Mast, Sovilla, 95, Arthur, Ill., died Jan. 1. Spouse: Rudy Mast (deceased). Parents: David and Mary Troyer. Children: Sarah Litwiller, Edna Hochstedler, Clara King, Mary Litzinger, Paul, Freeman; 20 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 5 at Arthur Mennonite Church.

Miller, Ina, 95, Leo, Ind., died Jan. 13. Spouse: Menno Miller (deceased). Parents: Abraham and Catherine Baer Miller. Children: Roger, Arnold, Norma Rupp, Louella Garrett; 13 grandchildren; 47 great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 17 at Smith-Miner Funeral Home, Midland, Mich.

Miller, Lydia Leona Yoder, 93, Hesston, Kan., died Jan. 28. Spouse: Chester Miller. Parents: Mahlon E. and Anna Hershberger Yoder. Children: Arlin, Laurel; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 31 at Schowalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Miller, Sanford, 88, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 1 of leukemia. Spouse: (1st) Theresa Bennett Miller (deceased), (2nd) Frances Wolf Miller (deceased). Parents: Dan and Magdalena Egli Miller. Children: Karen Self, Sanford A.; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 5 at Yoder-Culp Funeral Home, Goshen.

Mohn, Dorothy Galle, 94, Reedley, Calif., died Dec. 1. Spouse: Harlen Mohn (deceased). Parents: John W. and Anna Haury Galle. Children: Stanley, Kenneth; six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 3 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Neumann, Harold H., 83, Hesston, Kan., died Jan. 22. Spouse: Helen Elliott Neumann. Parents: Henry and Elizabeth Janzen Neumann. Child: Susan Neumann Lamb; two grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 31 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Nickel, Magdalene, 87, Newton, Kan., died Jan. 4. Parents: Johann and Anna Goertze Nickel. Funeral: Jan. 8 at Presbyterian Manor Chapel, Newton.

Preheim, Chris, 96, Freeman, S.D., died Jan. 5. Spouse: Celia Graber (deceased). Parents: Peter J. and Anna Mueller Preheim. Children: Ardys Becker, Doyle, Janet Lautzenheiser; nine grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 10 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Rahn, Benjamin P., 90, Inman, Kan., died Jan. 7. Spouse: Tena Wieler Rahn. Parents: Peter and Gertrude Pankratz Rahn. Children: Ivan, Eugene, Frances Nunemacher; six grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 12 at Inman Mennonite Church.

Secker, Virginia Ann, 41, Lancaster, Pa., died Jan. 23. Parents: Philip Secker and Darlene Horst. Children: Shannon Miller, Audrey, Erin, Tristan Noah. Funeral: Jan. 31 at Stumptown Mennonite Church, Bird-In-Hand, Pa.

Stalter, Lois Wingard, 84, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 21 of a stroke. Spouse: Milo D. Stalter. Parents: Hiram and Nannie Miller Wingard. Children: Sandra Gingerich, Linda Butti, Carl D. (deceased); six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 24 at The Meetinghouse, Goshen, and Sept. 26 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Wadsworth, Ohio.

Stauffer, Freda Marie, 87, Kitchener, Ont., died Jan. 20. Parents: John and Lydia Stauffer. Funeral: Jan. 24 at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener.

Stucky, Eldo, 94, Newton, Kan., died Jan. 23. Spouse: Minnie Dick Stucky. Parents: Jacob B. and Mary Friesen Stucky. Children: Gene, Pat Litsey; four grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 27 at First Mennonite Church, Newton.

Wagner, Lorene Ulrich, 93, Chenoa, Ill., died Jan. 1 of heart failure. Spouse: Ezra "Bud" Wagner (deceased). Parents: Christian and Elizabeth Schertz Ulrich. Children: Marilyn, Richard; four grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 5 at Meadows Mennonite Church, Chenoa.

Wiebe, Oscar W., 98, Beatrice, Neb., died Jan. 12. Spouse: Maria Wiebe (deceased). Parents: Heinrich J. and Marie Wiebe. Children: Marlene Moore, Maria L. Allison, David, Charlotte; two grandchildren. Memorial service: Jan. 24 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice.

Willouer, Leroy M., 84, Souderton, Pa., died Jan. 25. Parents: Henry L. and Alice B. Mininger Willouer. Funeral: Jan. 29 at Souderton Mennonite Home.

Yothers, Henry, 90, Souderton, Pa., died Jan. 27. Spouse: Edna Musselman Yothers (deceased). Parents: Abram and Annie Rice Yothers. Children: Arlene Ruth, Kathryn Schlosser, Jean Anders, Blanche Freed, Doris Hunsberger, Betty Clemmer, Kenneth, Ray, Paul, Abram, Robert; 27 grandchildren; 40 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 31 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Zimmerman, Noah L., 80, Richfield, Pa., died Jan. 20. Parents: Adam G. and Mary Elizabeth Lauver Zimmerman. Funeral: Jan. 24 at Lauvers Mennonite Church, Richfield.

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Goshen College is seeking a part-time ***women's volleyball coach*** to begin July 2004, for the 2004-2005 academic year and beyond. Planning and recruitment work could start earlier. Responsibilities include: coach and develop the women's volleyball program, recruit quality student-athletes within Goshen College and NAIA guidelines, and plan, organize and implement budget and schedule. B.A. required, master's degree preferred with instructional and coaching expertise suitable to the collegiate level. To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, www.goshen.edu/employment. Women and minority persons are especially encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite church. Administrative and teaching faculty members are expected to share this commitment.

Goshen College is seeking a part-time ***men's and women's cross country coach*** to begin July 2004, for the 2004-2005 academic year and beyond. Planning and recruitment work could start earlier. Responsibilities include: coach and develop the men's and women's cross country program, recruit quality student-athletes within Goshen College and NAIA guidelines, and plan, organize and implement budget and schedule. B.A. required, master's degree preferred with instructional and coaching expertise suitable to the collegiate level. To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, www.goshen.edu/employment. Women and minority persons are especially encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite church. Administrative and teaching faculty members are expected to share this commitment.

Mennonite Mission Network *Fellowship Visit to Europe* June 1-16. Explore Mission Network Ministry sites and meet workers in England, France, Belgium and the Netherlands. For more information contact Diana Cook at 866-866-2872; www.MennoniteMission.net.

Goshen College is seeking a part-time ***men's golf coach*** to begin July 2004, for the 2004-2005 academic year and beyond. Planning and recruitment work could start earlier. Responsibilities include: coach and develop the men's golf program, recruit quality student-athletes within Goshen College and NAIA guidelines, and plan, organize and implement budget and schedule. B.A. required, master's degree preferred with instructional and coaching expertise suitable to the collegiate level. To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, www.goshen.edu/employment. Women and minority persons are especially encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite church. Administrative and teaching faculty members are expected to share this commitment.

Bluffton College is seeking a ***director of public relations.*** The director will lead the public relations team of five persons and have responsibility for planning internal and external communications strategies, including sports information. In addition, the director will oversee media relations, news service and general publicity. The director will also coordinate, plan, carry out Bluffton College advertising, and will be a member of the campus integrated marketing team. The director will report directly to the vice president for institutional advancement. Bachelor's degree in public relations, communications or related field is required. A minimum of five years experience in public relations field is preferred. Review of applications will begin immediately and will be accepted until the position is filled. A letter of application with a resumé and list of references may be sent to Julie Hadding, 280 W. College Ave., Ste. 1, Bluffton, OH 45817-1196. AA/EOE. Members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply.

Menno-Hof is accepting applications for ***volunteer host/hostess*** plus light housekeeping. Opportunity to share your faith in the Anabaptist tradition with people from around the world! Menno-Hof provides a completely furnished apartment, with all expenses paid plus a monthly stipend. Position available mid-September. Contact Joseph Yoder at Box 701, Shipshewana, IN 46565 or 260-768-4117 or email mennohof@tln.net for more information.

Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan., seeks candidates for a half-time position as ***associate pastor*** with primary responsibility for youth (junior high-college) as part of a multi-staff team. Position (three-year contract) open Aug. 15. Contact Merrill F. Raber, chair, Search Committee, 620 Rolling Hills Circle, Newton, KS 67114; 316-283-6444; mbraber@cox.net.

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SMALL TOWN THEATRE and COUNTRY GARDENS (July 27 - August 2)
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MMBS Reunion! The ***Michigan Mennonite Bible School,*** held from 1946 to 1966, is planning a reunion for April 17-18, at the Fairview Mennonite Church, Fairview, Mich. All former students, faculty and ministers who attended are invited to participate. For further information and to RSVP, contact Lloyd Troyer, 989-848-5881; or Fairview Mennonite Church, 989-848-2953; email fairviewmennonite@M33access.com; fax 989-848-5409.

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Connecting Families Weekend, April 16-18, at Antiochian Village, Ligonier, Pa. ***Theme: "Charity—A Gateway to Openness."*** Speaker is James Lehman, director of Voices for an Open Spirit, a grassroots movement in the Church of the Brethren. Connecting Families welcomes families, friends and supporters of all gay, lesbian, transgender and bisexual people, as well as GLBT persons. This is intended to be a safe, relaxing weekend to share stories and common concerns regarding minority sexual orientation issues as it affects our families, friends, churches and ourselves. Contact Stephen at 301-864-6633 or email larandsteph@aol.com.

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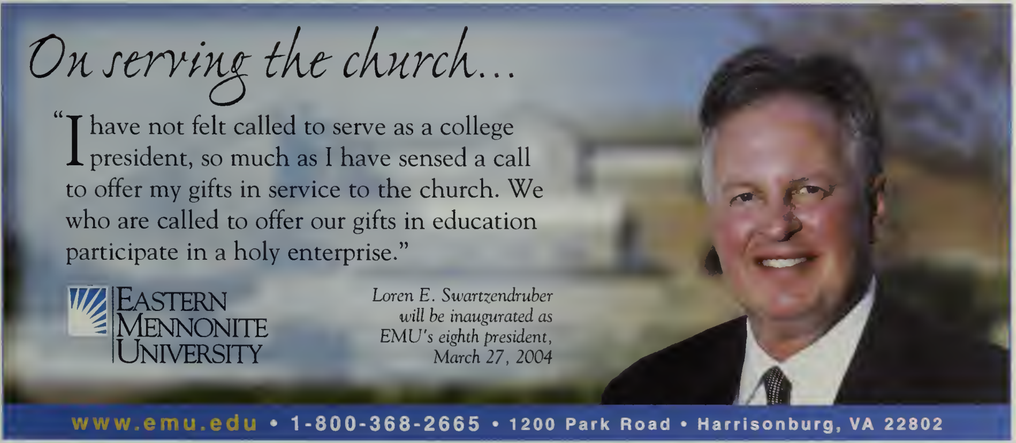

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Stormfront: The Good News of God by James V. Brownson, Inagrace T. Dietterich, Barry A. Harvey and Charles C. West (Eerdmans, 2003, $18) investigates how the gospel intersects American culture and seeks to reorient the church to its full and proper missonal vocation.

Women and Christianity: Volume III: From the Reformation to the 21st Century by Mary T. Malone (Orbis Press, 2003, $20) is the concluding volume of Malone's history of women and Christianity. This book brings to light the persistent courage and innovative quality of women's lives.

Meditation Without Gurus: A Guide to the Heart of Practice by Clark Strand (SkyLight Paths, 2003, $16.95) strips meditation down to its essential heart—one of simplicity, lightness and peace—proving to readers that the most important part of practice is not getting into the lotus position but becoming fully present in the moment.

Unionists and the Civil War Experience in the Shenandoah Valley by David Rodes and Norman Wenger, edited by Emmert Bittinger (Valley Research Associates, 2003, $58.50), documents how 37 families of the Brethren, Mennonite, Methodist Episcopal and German Reformed churches gave witness to their convictions during a difficult time. Order from P.O. Box 526, Dayton, VA 22821, VRAssociates526@aol.com.

Prayers for Peace, edited by Karl Pruter (St. Willibrord Press, 2004, $2.50), is a pocket-sized booklet of prayers. Order from the publisher at P.O. Box 63, Highlandville, MO 65669, bishopkarl@juno.com.

Gateway Films, P.O. Box 540, Worcester, PA 19490, www.visionvideo.com, offers these new videos: **Bless You, Prison** (2003, $24.99, 86 minutes) tells of Nicoleta Valery Grossu, who found God in the communist Romanian prisons; **Worth It All** (2003, $19.99, 32 minutes) tells of a young missionary family shot out of the skies over Peru as they were mistaken for drug couriers; **Commitment: My Heart, Christ's Home** (2001, $18.99, 23 minutes) is an eight-session study that shows aspects of the Christian life as Jesus sees them.

A Matrix of Meanings: Finding God in Pop Culture by Craig Detweiler and Barry Taylor (Baker Academic, 2003, $17.99) looks at various aspects of pop culture—including advertising, music, movies, television, fashion, sports and art—from a theological perspective.

Making Sense of Church: Eavesdropping on Emerging Conversations about God, Community and Culture by Spencer Burke with Colleen Pepper (Zondervan, 2003, $16.99) uses conversations from the Web site theOoze.com and guides readers through important issues facing the emerging church.

Hasidic Tales: Annotated and Explained by Rami Shapiro (SkyLight Paths, 2004, $16.95) shows how tales from the Hasidic masters can become companions for anyone undertaking a personal spiritual journey.

Algeria: Where Mennonites and Muslims Met: 1955-1978 by Marian E. Hostetler (2003, $11) is the story of a Mennonite encounter with a Muslim culture. It is available from the author at 57717 Seventh St., Elkhart, IN 46517, Marianho@aol.com.

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Everett J. Thomas

Bottom-line questions

Over the next six weeks churchwide agencies that are an integral part of Mennonite Church USA will release annual reports about their finances. Early indications suggest that most will describe the fiscal year that ended Jan. 31 as having been difficult.

It is important these year-end reports be reviewed widely because each agency is ultimately accountable to members in each congregation. Such accountability is direct: Every congregation has at least one member who may participate in the biennial Delegate Assembly, the final authority in our denominational polity.

The recent difficulties with Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pa., are another reason to pay attention. We almost lost MPH as a denominational resource because internal practices did not comply with generally accepted accounting principles and because we were either too trusting of MPH leadership in the 1990s ... or were rebuffed when seeking information.

Most of these boards and agencies—Executive Board, Mennonite Mission Network and the binational Mennonite Publishing Network—exercise their ministries with our money. Unfortunately, not enough of our money made it into their programs last year.

For example, the Executive Board and Mennonite Mission Network trimmed their budgets last fall. But according to preliminary unaudited reports at the Jan. 29-31 Executive Board meeting in Portland, Ore., both will conclude their fiscal year with a net loss in assets. The Executive Board will have used up to $90,000 of its reserves in order to pay its bills. Mennonite Mission Network, which cut its budget by nearly $1 million last fall, will still end with a shortfall of approximately $650,000. Similarly, Mennonite Publishing Network was able to raise less than anticipated in its "barn-raising" campaign to repay a $2.3 million loan and now has restructured its remaining long-term debt of $3.7 million (see page 6).

Should an agency that receives a contribution give a portion of that contribution to another part of the church?

The question for each of these agencies is, Why is there less financial support than anticipated? The national recession—now just ending—is part of the answer. But there are other, more complex reasons.

First, these agencies are new in a new denomination. Old loyalties to former mission boards and denominational agencies do not transfer easily. Further, a recent study of the new denomination's identity confirms that Mennonite Church USA is still a fuzzy idea to many people. But there is another problem: The funding system put in place for the new denomination is not working well. So in late January, the Executive Board took action to remodel it.

According to Ted Stuckey, who directs the Executive Board's Office of Administration, the system is not able to determine how contributions should be divided when someone gives their "first-fruits offering." Here's the central issue: Are donors willing to allow an agency that receives their contribution to pass on a portion of that donation to another part of the church?

"The question is, Should organizations tithe?" Stuckey said at the Executive Board's January meeting. "Contributors want to know how much you keep and how much you give away."

That problem is exacerbated for the Executive Board, since their role in the church—the only agency with responsibility for "the whole"—is invisible in the current funding system. David Boshart, a leader in the Great Plains conference, makes that point and calls for the Executive Board and its staff to be more visible across the church (page 16).

Although many of us find it a challenge to keep our checkbooks balanced—let alone understand balance sheets from agencies with multimillion-dollar budgets—it is our responsibility to hold denominational agencies financially accountable. There are two important things to observe. First, has the agency received a favorable opinion about its finances in an audit from a reputable accounting firm? Second, did the agency end the fiscal year with greater, or fewer assets? For church members who want to be good stewards of our institutions, these are bottom-line questions.—*ejt*

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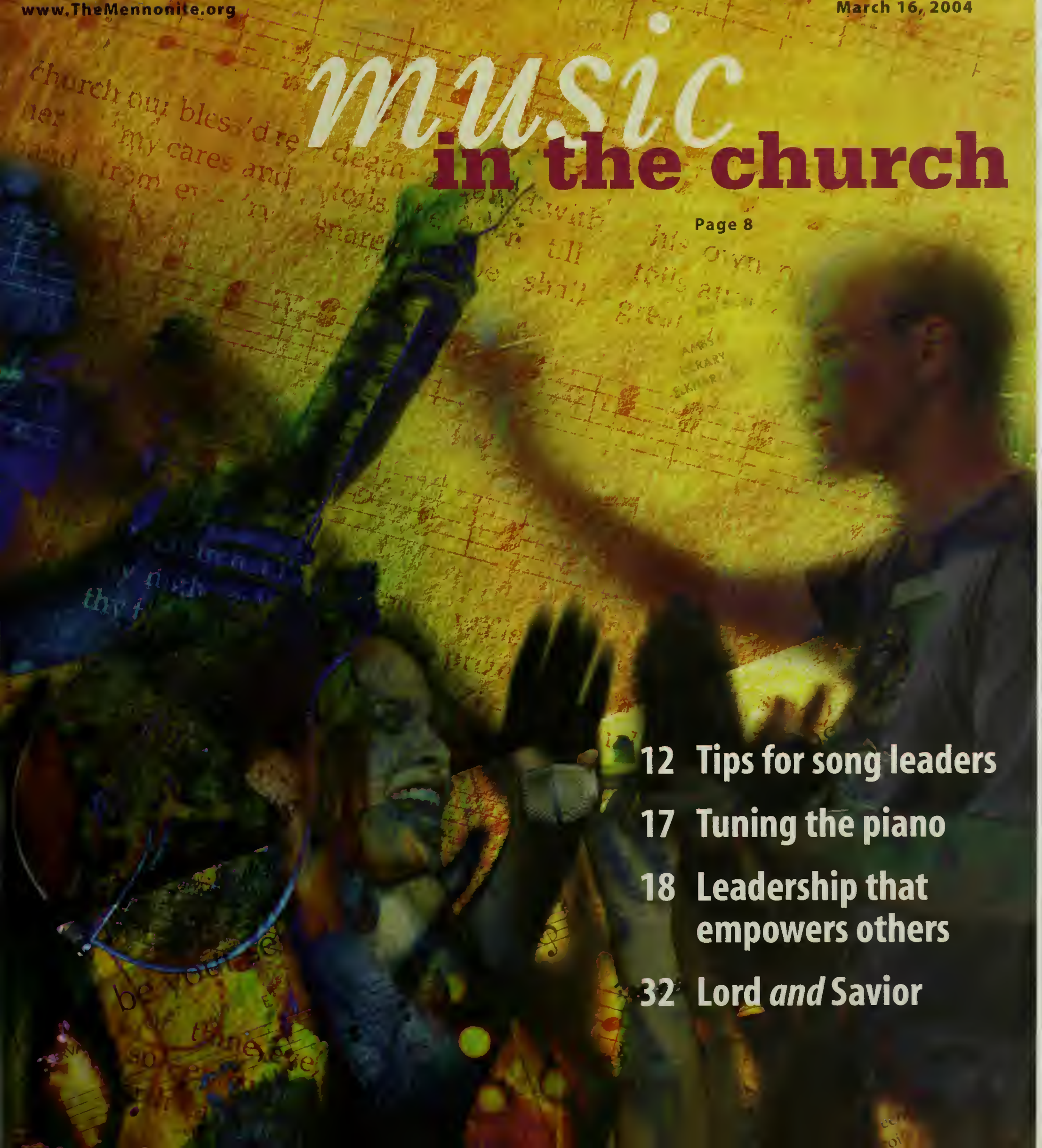
March 16, 2004



music in the church

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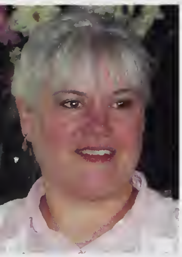
A passionate faith



Donna Mast is co-pastor of Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

I sat with someone who was passionate about the many products that she had to sell. She believed that she had something the world sorely needs and she wasn't ashamed to tell people just exactly why they need to buy her products.

What caught my attention was the absolute faith placed in the products. She told me she sells these products not for the money she can earn but because these are items the world and its people desperately need to improve the quality of life. She told me about her products because she cared about my well-being, and she believed her products have the ability to make my life better.

I've also sat in several worship services for which I had no responsibility. What I observed was in some cases inspiring and in far too many others disheartening.

Our worship will reflect the reality that life is better with Jesus when we truly believe it, when we are passionate about this truth.

I saw people having difficulty staying awake. I see this when I am leading worship or preaching, so it came as no surprise. I try to give people the benefit of the doubt, knowing that many have had long and stress-filled weeks. Just showing up is an act of commitment and faith.

I have noticed the ebb and flow of worshippers as they leave worship and reenter. Again I want to give people the benefit of the doubt. I don't know what situations may necessitate entering late or walking out early. But when I see similar movement in public programs such as school concerts, I wonder if our society is losing its sense of social etiquette. Perhaps this same rudeness and lack of care for others in the audiences I've been a part of is invading our worship spaces as well.

What most disheartens me is the number of people who are physically present but not engaged in worship. If the people I have seen reading, doing word searches and crossword puzzles or visiting during worship had been children or teens, I would find it easier to understand, but these were adults who I assume were at the worship of their own choosing.

I have noticed the body language of those around me as we stand to sing. Some sing with energy—passion even. But others barely open their mouths or don't sing at all. More telling is the posture of boredom many show. How can we sing with such dispassion about the God of the universe who has reached out to us in love? This season of Lent looks toward the time of Jesus' passion—his suffering and death. Jesus faced his passion because he was passionate about us. How dare we sing of our love for him in unenthusiastic tones?

I join other pastors in my desire to assist people into a deeper worship of our Lord. Seminars can inspire, and technology, when used well, can enhance our worship, but I don't think these are key to revitalizing worship. We need the passion of knowing we hold a reality far better than any product or idea. Jesus is the reality people desperately need. Knowing Jesus as Lord and Savior certainly improves the quality of life here on earth and is the difference between life and death for eternity. We tell others about Jesus because we care about their well-being.

My prayer for the people of our congregations is that we will know without a doubt that we have something the world sorely needs and we won't be ashamed to tell others just exactly why they need to know Jesus. Our worship will reflect the reality that life is better with Jesus when we truly believe it, when we are passionate about this truth. TM

TheMennonite

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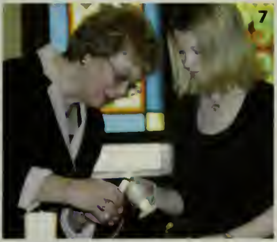
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Vocabulary contributes to change

The Feb. 17 issue hit the proverbial nail squarely on the head. I certainly resonate with James Lapp's helpful explanation of the missional church ("From Mission to Missional") and appreciated the practical aspects of related features on being a Good Samaritan church. Thank you, Marlene Kropf, for your bold, stimulating thoughts on worship ("Lost Voices in Worship") and to Everett J. Thomas for the comic relief in the editorial, "Missional and Manure." Deep-seated engrams and unspoken feelings make our vocabulary and ways of expressing unfamiliar concepts so critical. Keep up the good work, and may God help us in our responses to these important challenges.—*Lee Suderman, Aliso Viejo, Calif.*

The Passion

We invite readers to send one or two sentences describing their experience with the movie *The Passion of the Christ*. We will publish a selection of these responses on a page in the April 6 issue.

Missional and manure

The title of the Feb. 17 editorial ("Missional and Manure") caught my eye. I'm not a great fan of the word "missional"; however, I feel it has its merits and by and large has a good meaning. To equate it with manure seemed tacky at first. But perhaps there is a lesson for us in this statement. Farmers use manure as fertilizer. Isn't that what being missional is all about? We are to be the fertilizer of God's people. As fertilizer stimulates growth in the field, so we need to stimulate growth in the churched and unchurched around us. In 1 Peter 4:10-11 we are instructed to use whatever gifts we have to draw in those around us, whether we have the gift (fertilizer) of hospitality, speaking or whatever. We also need to remember that the most important gift is love.—*Ken Mullett, Goshen, Ind.*

Mission to missional

The article by James Lapp ("Mission to Missional," Feb. 17) was the best articulation I've heard regarding the challenge before Mennonite Church USA. As a church planter amazed that a church with a core of three couples mushroomed into a congregation of 850 weekly worshippers—most of whom were unchurched seekers—I believe Lapp has hit the nail on the head. All six of the transitions the article listed have been a part of the DNA of Cape Christian Fellowship since its launch in 1987. I feel incredibly privileged to be a small part of what God is doing in southwest Florida as we see daily life-changing results because of a missional congregation.—*Dennis Gingerich, Cape Coral, Fla.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Music is the theme of this issue. Heidi Regier Kreider (page 8) rejects the notion that some congregational music is contemporary while another kind is traditional and says, "This dichotomy is a myth that perpetuates poor theology, inaccurate understandings of music and divisive practices." William Eash (page 12) calls for song leaders to take that leadership role seriously and says, "Singing is a difficult and complex task. Song leading is even more difficult, for so much responsibility for worship lies within the sung word." Glenn Lehman (page 14) says that Handel's *Messiah* is more appropriately sung at Easter than at Christmas but warns congregations that sing it, "Masterpieces, like megavitamins, cannot make up for a year of otherwise slovenly musical diets." All, however, want to strengthen music in the church.—*Editor*

James Lapp writes, "Being a missional church seeks to shift the emphasis from fad to the eternal purposes of God." I don't believe our missionaries think they are part of a fad. Certainly I don't consider my parents' 40 years in China and my wife and my 40 years in Taiwan a fad.

Having implied that our Mennonite missionary activities have been a fad, Lapp says, "We are called to serve the nations around us." He quotes Jesus' statement, "'And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8)." I don't understand what he thinks "missions" has been doing. As a result of Mennonite missions we have Mennonite churches in many nations and on all continents. Fad?! —*Roland P. Brown, North Newton, Kan.*

Firstfruits is not missional

Re "Funding Crunch, Weak 'Brand Identity' " (Feb. 17): It is rather telling that in an issue devoted to understanding Mennonite Church USA's buzz word, "missional," the Executive Board is finding out that it must rework its firstfruits system. Deep in our biblical bones we know that firstfruits is a harvest-offering term for taking care of the administration of the sanctuary; the term is not particularly "missional." Is the difficulty the Executive Board is encountering a signal that it should be satisfied with "administrative" giving, live accordingly and find other means of encouraging "widow's mite" giving?—*Donald R. Steelberg, Wichita, Kan.*

Sitting with others in pain

Thank you, Ginnie Horst Burkholder, for your openness and vulnerability in "Lessons From the Good Samaritan on Being a Missional Church" (Feb. 17). This is the article I was looking for after my husband's brain aneurysm and stroke, which resulted in some brain damage following surgery in 1979. I agree wholeheartedly that acknowledging our wounds, naming them and grieving them helps us sit with others in pain. Like Burkholder, Samaritans carried me in my time of intense grief, and God continues to heal me as our life together has taken a different turn. Reading this article touched me deeper than any I have read recently.—*Lourene Bender, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Misinformation about AIDS

Re Reed Burkholder's letter, "Responding to the AIDS Crisis" (Readers Say, Feb. 17): In order to evaluate the validity of the thinking of any group of scientists we need to know who they are, what credentials they bring to their work and what body of research supports their conclusions. Instead Burkholder merely refers to "many scientists and physicians who have little power to be heard." He implies that the current understanding of AIDS as infectious and sexually communicable is not based on scientific evidence, but he does not provide any documentation for this view. He also does not offer any alternative theories about the causes of AIDS or suggest methods of prevention and treatment. —*Patricia Frazier, South Bend, Ind.*

Reed Burkholder's letter contains some serious misinformation about HIV/AIDS. If HIV/AIDS is not infectious or sexually communicable, as Burkholder contends, how is it that it has become a pandemic in Africa?

If any of the body fluids of an infected person come into contact with any body openings of another person there is excellent opportunity for the virus to be transmitted. HIV is transmitted primarily by sexual activity and sharing needles with an infected partner. All a person has to do to protect themselves from HIV infection is to not get in contact with the body fluids of an infected person.

The best defense against HIV today is correct information so people know how to protect themselves and how they can help infected people without putting themselves at risk. It is relatively easy to protect oneself from HIV infection. There is no known cure. The misinformation in Burkholder's letter will serve to spread the virus further. It is not who you are but what you do that puts you at risk for HIV infection.—*Homer Yutzy, Wauseon, Ohio*

Correcting the renovation story

We were pleased to see a photo and mention of our Mennonite Central Committee fund-raising project (News Digest, Feb. 7). But I would like to correct a number of inaccuracies in the photo caption. First, the children in the photo are good friends and great help, but Levi and Lexi are not my children. Their parents are Lisa and Joe Ebersole. Second, the house in the background is not the house being worked on; the construction site is to the right. Third, while we are completely rebuilding the 480-square-foot original house, we are also adding on nearly 900-square-feet of new construction.—*Kathy Howell, Corvallis, Ore.*

Mennonite police

It was with morbid fascination that I read the article about police officers who want to be Mennonite ("Police Officers Consider Peace Role, Beliefs," Jan. 20). If one looks closely at the law-enforcement people of U.S downtowns, one will see that lethal force is prominently displayed as an option. If one is to uphold what in the past was the Anabaptist interpretation of the gospel, then can lethal force ever be an option? It would be interesting to hear what early Anabaptists Dirk Willems or Michael Sattler would have to say on the subject.

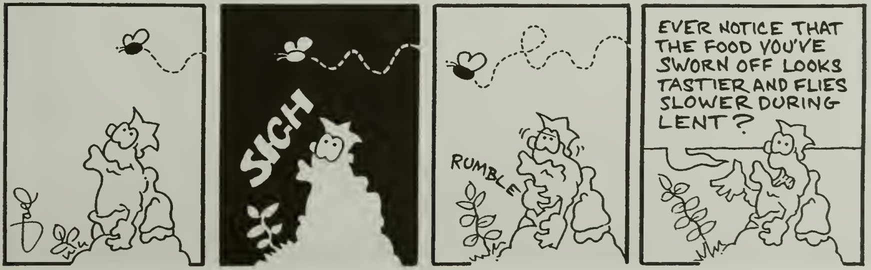
I suggest there be a movement toward separation rather than toward synchronization. A watered-down gospel becomes lukewarm.—*Dan Lais, Lebanon, Ore.*

It was sarcasm

In response to Gerald Biesecker-Mast's response to my not fully quoting John Howard Yoder (Readers Say, Feb. 17): I was in no way suggesting that Yoder "approved" of a superficial Christianity, and I believe that my brief article made that clear. However, if it did not, I apologize for any confusion. I assumed the sarcastic tone of the quote, followed by my commentary, made it apparent that we should be against any synthetic form of Christianity.—*Tripp York, Burlington, N.C.*

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. —*Editors*

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**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RUMBLE
EVER NOTICE THAT THE FOOD YOU'VE SWORN OFF LOOKS TASTIER AND FLIES SLOWER DURING LENT?

IN BRIEF

Students hear stories of healing

Lynn Shiner (above), director of the Pennsylvania Victims Compensation Program, tells her "survivor's story" in a plenary talk at the annual Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship hosted by Eastern Mennonite University Feb. 20-21. The event, under the theme "Stories of Healing," drew 140 participants from Mennonite colleges and other schools across the United States and Canada.

Mennonite church dedicates addition

South Hutchinson (Kan.) Mennonite Church dedicated a new addition to its building on Feb. 15. About 150 people participated in the ceremony, which highlighted God's purposes for the church as fellowship, ministry, worship, discipleship and evangelism. The new facility contains nursery space, three classrooms, a multipurpose room and a covered drop-off area.

Naked ye came

A developer wants to recreate a Garden of Eden just outside Tampa, Fla., for Christian nudists. "When people are right with God, they do not have to fear nudity," says David Blood, executive director of the project. *—The United Church Observer* (March)

SCC committee recommends membership

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas—Meeting Feb. 9-10 here, the executive committee of South Central Conference (SCC) unanimously supported a recommendation that it lead the process to become full members of Mennonite Church USA in July.

The administrative committee brought the recommendation following a series of listening meetings in each of the districts of SCC. Plans call for discernment and a decision on the recommendation at SCC's annual meeting July 16-18 in Austin, Texas.*—South Central Conference Messenger*

Two drown on tour in Guatemala

WINNIPEG—Diane Kroeker of Winnipeg and Walter Goertz of Richmond, B.C., drowned Feb. 29 while swimming in the Pacific Ocean during a travel tour to Guatemala. They were near Coatepeque, on the coast of Guatemala. Canadian Mennonite University president Gerald Gerbrandt called it a tragedy for the families and for CMU. Kroeker, 60, was the tour administrator and served as administrator for the Outtatown program (formerly School of Discipleship). She is survived by husband Irvin, who was on the tour, and three grown daughters. Goertz, 77, was a tour participant and is survived by his wife, Anne, who was also on the tour. They were part of the Adventure for the Soul Adult Tour, organized by the Outtatown program of CMU, a program for those 30 and older. The group was midway through a two-week tour to Guatemala to study local history and work with local churches on service projects.*—Canadian Mennonite University*

Alternative news of peace on the Web

GOSHEN, Ind.—A new "e-zine" (email magazine) called *PeaceSigns* challenges readers to look at current events from a Mennonite perspective.

The goal of the articles, commentary, comics and posters in *PeaceSigns* is to invite people to explore Christian peacemaking.

Brainstorming for *PeaceSigns* began last summer, when Mennonite Church USA peace staff tried to help churches respond to U.S. military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq. Knowing how to respond is difficult, especially because news media did not portray the whole story, says Susan Mark Landis, *PeaceSigns* publisher and peace advocate for Mennonite Church USA.

Melanie Zuercher of Hesston, Kan., edits *PeaceSigns*, which is available through the Peace and Justice Network, a ministry of Mennonite Mission Network and the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA. To subscribe, visit http://peace.mennolink.org/peacesigns/index.html. *—Kendra King for Mennonite Church USA News Service*

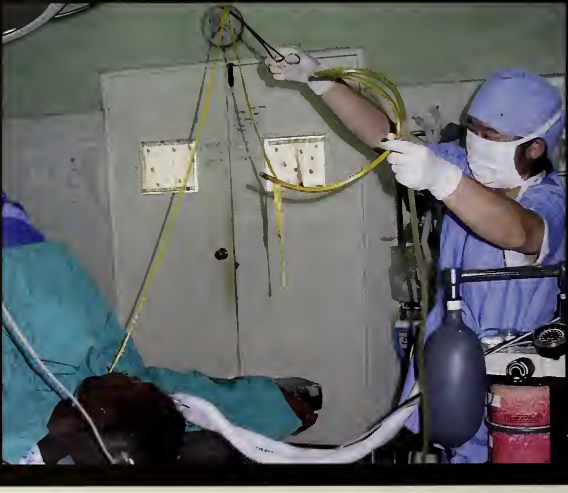
March madness for Mennonite hoopsters

GOSHEN, Ind., and HARRISONBURG, Va.—Two Mennonite colleges sent their women's basketball teams to national tournaments this month.

Goshen College's team defeated Indiana Wesleyan University 70-64 in the championship game of the Mid-Central Conference tournament on March 1. For women's basketball this was Goshen's first conference championship and its

As the worm turns

A physician pulls a 19-foot tapeworm from a man who has been treated with deworming medication. Claude Good, a volunteer at Franconia Conference of Mennonite Church USA, helps secure funding for deworming projects around the world through The Worm Project. Congregations in Franconia Conference and beyond help to provide funds used for the manufacture of five-cent pills that provide deworming treatment. A grade-school Sunday school class figured that in high-infestation areas, worms on average eat about one ounce of a child's ingested food per day, or about two pounds per month. So $5 of coins equals about 1,000 pounds of extra food for malnourished children that would have been lost to worms. To contact Good, write ClaudeG@fmc-online.org.



Mennonite Church USA photo

This little light of mine

Carol Moore, left, lights the lamp of Bethel College nursing student Becky Jantz, Hillsboro, Kan., during the nursing lamplighting ceremony Feb. 22 at Bethel in North Newton, Kan. The ceremony honored 29 junior-level nursing students for their commitment to the profession. Moore chairs the nursing program at Bethel.

first trip to the NAIA national tournament.

On Feb. 28, Eastern Mennonite University defeated defending champion Randolph-Macon 65-54 to win the Old Dominion Athletic Conference women's basketball championship.

Eastern Mennonite received the automatic bid to the NCAA Division III women's basketball tournament.—*Goshen College and Eastern Mennonite University*

Firstfruits giving made easy

NEWTON, Kan.—Through a new Mennonite Church USA program called Firstfruits Direct Giving (FDG), individuals can elect to have tithe money directly transferred from checking account to congregation. This provides an efficient and cost-effective alternative to traditional giving methods.

This service "helps members build consistency in giving, helps them to be faithful to their stewardship commitment and blesses the church with a more consistent income," says Jim Smith, MMA church relations manager.

Vanco Services, a financial technology company providing electronic funds transfer services to more than 6,000 churches in the United States, is the approved provider for the program.

During 2004, congregations that sign up for FDG will receive an MMA "electronic giving grant" to cover the cost of transactions for the year.

For more information contact John Hedin at 800-774-9355, ext. 497; jhedin@vancoservices.com. —*Kendra King, Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Aron Jantzen, career missionary to India, dies

NEWTON, Kan.—Aron Jantzen, 93, former mission worker in India, died Feb. 13, in Alhambra, Calif. He was among six of 10 children of Frank F. and Anna Jantzen who served in overseas missions.

Jantzen, a career missionary to India, served the mission board of the former General Conference Mennonite Church, a predecessor agency to Mennonite Mission Network. He married Kathryn Louthan, a registered nurse, in 1937, and they sailed to India in 1938. Until 1945, they were village evangelists in Korba.

Aron Jantzen

Later Jantzen served as superintendent at Bethesda Leprosy Hospital and Homes in Champa. From 1963 to 1968, he served in Newton as the first candidate secretary for the mission board. They returned to India in 1968 to work at the Bethesda hospital in Champa, then at Sewa Bhawan Hospital in Jagdeeshpur until 1974.

Jantzen was preceded in death by Kathryn, who died Sept. 3, 1988. He is survived by his second wife, Betty Griffith Jantzen; daughter Cynthia, of Monrovia, Calif; three grandchildren, two step-grandchildren and one step-great-grandson; two brothers, Richard of Austin, Texas, and Lubin of Hesston, Kan.; and one sister, Anna Jantzen of Stockton, Calif.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

MCC Canada photo

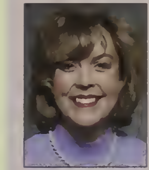
Resource addresses youth suicide

Tanya Fifield of Truro, N.S., knows you can't work with youth without talking about suicide. It's one of the more challenging issues she deals with in her job at HighRock Youth Ministries, a position partially funded by Mennonite Central Committee. Despite its dark nature, suicide continues to be one of the more popular topics she deals with as the coordinator of Extreme Talk: day-long discussions sponsored by HighRock on issues facing youth, held in four Truro-area junior high schools each year. To help facilitate discussion, MCC is providing Fifield, and others like her, with a new resource. "Talk About It: Youth and Suicide," released late last year, is a new brochure designed specifically for young people.

IN BRIEF

Hope for Haitians

Despite the civil unrest, Haitian artisans have hope for the immediate future thanks to Ten Thousand Villages, which has worked with artisans in Haiti since 1978. A fair-trade retail store in Souderton, Pa., offers cut metal and river rock sculptures made by skilled artisans in Haiti. The fair prices and consistent work the artisans receive means stability and hope in times of uncertainty.



Young alumni winner fights pain

Cheryl L. Stucky (above), Milwaukee, Wis., is the recipient of the 2004 Bethel College Young Alumni Award. She was honored March 8 on the North Newton, Kan., campus. A neuroscientist, Stucky is an assistant professor in the department of cell biology, neurobiology and anatomy at the Medical College of Wisconsin, where she directs the work of five full-time employees in her own pain research lab. Her work focuses on understanding the cellular and molecular mechanisms that underlie pain. She is also an active member of the teaching faculty. Stucky graduated with a bachelor's degree in biology from Bethel in 1987.

music in the church

by Heidi Regier Kreider

hymn singing is important, dear to our heart, and therefore a source of strong opinions, feelings and—not surprisingly—conflict in the church. I want to challenge some assumptions and preconceptions we have about music in worship, then offer some questions.

Much of the current discussion around music in the church is construed as a battle between "contemporary" and "traditional" music. I believe that this dichotomy is a myth that perpetuates poor theology, inaccurate understandings of music and divisive practices. These words are labels that are poorly defined and used to generalize about music in ways that do not bring clarity.

Congregational music is traditional and contemporary; let's not promote wrong assumptions about worship music.

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First, all music practiced in the congregation is traditional, and it is all contemporary. It is traditional in that it draws on historical traditions, patterns, styles and texts that have developed over centuries. It connects us to the saints who have gone before us, the community of faith that has worshiped God for generation after generation. Here are examples of "new" music using ancient texts (all hymn numbers are from Hymnal: A Worship Book, or HWB):

- 76, "Praise, I will praise you Lord" (based on Psalm 9:1-2)
- 112, "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic" (Psalm 8)
- 584, "They that wait upon the Lord" (based on Isaiah 40:31).

> **We should be consumed by worship rather than be consumers of worship who selectively shop for our favorite style of worship.**

Singing voice: All music is contemporary in that it is being sung now, by today's church. It is given life and breath by the singing voice of the congregation. It takes on added and new significance from the context in which it is sung. Here are examples of "old" music that comes alive and has meaning in repeated singing:

- 143 "Amazing grace!" (see Bill Moyers' wonderful video "Amazing Grace")
- 172 "O come, O come, Immanuel" (We can't celebrate Advent without it).

A second assumption I want to challenge is that to achieve musical integrity in the church we must balance everyone's opinions and preferences for music. People are entitled to their opinions, but I do not believe people's opinions, likes and dislikes are sufficient criteria or the best criteria for measuring music in the church.

Psalm 95 says:

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

"O come, let us sing to the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
Let us come into [God's] presence with thanksgiving;
Let us make a joyful noise to [God] with songs of praise!
For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods …
Come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!"

Note what Psalm 95 does not say:

"Come, let us sing our favorite style of music:
Let us come into God's presence in the way that feels comfortable and familiar to me.
Let us make the kind of noise that pleases my ears and personality.
For the opinions I hold are great ideas, and a great influence over other people.
Come, let us worship and bow down before the musical style that I like best."

The object of worship is God, not me or you or even us together. The purpose of worship is to glorify God, not to satisfy our likes and dislikes or to judge other people's preferences. Worship puts God in the center, not our opinions, ideas or personal issues. As such, worship is not primarily about being comfortable or entertained. Worship should be transformative, challenging, enriching, purposeful, consuming. That's right, we should be consumed by worship rather than be consumers of worship who selectively shop for our favorite style of worship.

Congregational song is a gift of God, with power to uplift, transform, refresh and recreate the heart and soul. Our music-making uses the resources of the congregation.

I wonder if the so-called worship wars are fueled not so much by thoughtful convictions and conflicts in our theology of worship as by self-centeredness, biases, narrow assumptions and a lack of communication with others.

I don't mean to dismiss individual feelings but rather to move us away from purely subjective (and therefore non-negotiable) ways of assessing music and toward common objectives in worship and music. We need a language of music and a vocabulary of worship that goes beyond "I like" or "I don't like"—beyond contemporary versus traditional—and explores the reasons why we feel a particular way about music. Why is certain music meaningful or empty, inspiring or boring, engaging or offensive in worship? Why do some kinds of music draw us closer to God and other people, and why are other kinds of music alienating? What is it about music that helps us worship faithfully in spirit and truth?

Some objective criteria: In his book *The Church Musician* (HarperCollins, 1988) Paul Westermeyer identifies five aspects that should characterize congregational singing:

1. Congregational song is praise, a response to God's loving kindness toward us.

In the discussion of so-called contemporary music, people often talk about "praise and worship" music. This label troubles me because it implies that a certain style of music qualifies as praise and worship while other styles do not. Praise and worship are appropriate any time believers gather, no matter what style or tradition of music they sing in.

"Cantemos al Señor" (#55 in HWB) and "Holy God, we praise thy name" (#121 in HWB) are both songs of praise yet in different styles.

2. Congregational song is prayer. Westermeyer writes: "The roots of temple and synagogue worship are a sung tradition, as are Christian liturgies of both the east and the west. Though the emphasis may differ, almost all traditions treat music as prayer in some way. That should not surprise us any more than using music as praise should surprise us. Human beings both laugh and weep. Laughter is the incipient form of sung praise, as weeping is the incipient form of sung prayer. The two very often run into one another and cross."

"Breathe on me, breath of God" (#356 in HWB) and "God of grace and God of glory" (#366 in HWB) are both songs of prayer though again in different styles.

3. Congregational song proclaims and interprets God's word. From ancient times, biblical lessons have been sung or chanted. Our singing should cover the broad expanse of scriptural truth: creation and redemption, grace and discipleship, the cross and resurrection. Taken together, the hymns in HWB tell the story from creation to the history of Israel, the incarnation, the church in the world, the last times. Some hymns summarize the whole story, e.g., "We give thanks unto you" (#161) and "This is a story full of love" (#315).

4. Congregational song tells the story of God's people, recounting the history of God's mighty acts among us and expressing a wide range of human experience and emotion. Music has a communal and mnemonic character—that is, it draws people together and helps them remember, and at significant moments the people of God sing. In Exodus 25:1-8, Moses, Miriam and the people sang a song after their deliverance from Egypt; Jesus' birth narrative in Luke includes songs sung by Mary (1:47-55), Zechariah (1:68-79) and Simeon (2:29-32).

Our congregational singing should rehearse and tell the story of the faith community—our history, the people who have gone before us, the wonders of God's hand that have

brought us to where we are. It should be relevant, honest, related to the daily life and concerns and challenges of the people. Otherwise it will be artificial or transported from somewhere else. It should not deny reality or suffering but bring the complexity of life into God's presence and claims God's promises and love in the midst of that.

5. Congregational song is a gift of God, with power to uplift, transform, refresh and recreate the heart and soul. As good stewards of the musical gifts God has given us we sing with energy and vigor. Our music-making uses the talents, skills and resources in the congregation. Worship is participatory, a congregational activity, not a performance by the pastor or worship leader or choir or worship band or song leader. This raises caution about the term "special music" and the practice of using prerecorded music. "When in our music God is glorified" (#44 in HWB) celebrates the gift of music and our role as stewards of this gift.

Keeping in mind these five criteria, here are questions to widen our musical vocabulary. Why do we like a particular song? Is it because

- the text is meaningful or poetic? How so? Does it help interpret Scripture to relate it to the world and human life (for example, "This is a story full of love," #315)?
- the tune is pleasing, beautiful, catchy, haunting or arresting (for example, "God, who touches earth," #511)?
- the tune and text seem to interpret and complement each other so well, combining to be more than the sum of it parts?
- you feel strong emotion when you sing it?
- you have positive associations with the song? What stories in your memory does this song evoke?
- it creates unity with other people? This may happen either because the unison melody creates one common voice or because the multipart harmony expresses the many gifts working together in the one body.
- the tune or the text is challenging, nudging you to put your best effort into worshiping and to increase your knowledge and understanding (for example, a Bach chorale setting such as "O sacred Head now wounded," #252, or "Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing," #81)?
- the text is simple or repetitive, allowing you to sing with abandon (for example, "Seek ye first," #324)?
- you know the author or composer? (For me this would include "I sought the Lord," #506, and "There are many gifts," #304.)

Once we ask these questions, the statements "I like" or "I don't like" fade into the background and lose their power as ammunition for conflict over who is right or wrong. Instead we develop better understanding of why people feel and believe as they do.

Most of these questions can and should be asked of any style of music: four-part chorales, gospel songs, ancient chant, unison choruses, rock music, Taizé music or folk tunes. We should keep these questions in mind when we plan worship music and consider the following elements:

- the role a particular piece of music will play in worship. Is it meant to gather people together in God's presence? To interpret the word of God in Scripture or current events? To build unity among the people? To inspire, nurture, remember, reflect, rejoice? Or to express lament, sorrow, celebration, grief, anger, confession?
- a balance of music that is familiar (routine, predictable, comforting, repetitive) and challenging (new, surprising, prophetic, spontaneous);
- the congregation's history and ability to read music or sing parts;
- the physical space, acoustics, arrangement of singers;
- who is singing: female or male, young or old, visitors or long-term members, people of different language, ethnic and cultural background? How will this affect the choice and singing of music?
- leadership: who is leading? How are they going to lead? with instruments? By sound and/or sight? By direction with their hands and/or voice? If a song leader and instrument(s) are both used, who sets the pitch, tempo and other aspects of leading? How will the people know when to begin and what pitch, melody, parts and rhythm to sing? Will there be repetition or different sections? Performance, playing and singing are not the same as leading; make sure the person leading actually has the skills and experience to lead.

Right worship is not the result merely of right thinking, flawless preparation, eloquent efforts or sound theology (though these are all important). It comes by the grace of God.

- Avoid inappropriate uses of music: to fill empty space (music has a purpose; silence is OK), to manipulate people (recognize the power of music to direct our emotions and thoughts; be responsible stewards of this) or to showcase a performer (this includes children; with guidance children can serve as worship leaders rather than recitalists).

Conclusion: In the end, right worship is not the result merely of right thinking, flawless preparation, eloquent efforts or sound theology (though these are all important); right worship comes by the grace of God, who enlivens the gifts of music and other offerings we bring.

Heidi Regier Kreider is pastor of Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan., and has a Master of Divinity degree from Yale Divinity School through the Institute of Sacred Music, Worship and the Arts. This article is adapted from a presentation she gave last fall at Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

In worship, disparate people seek a unity far greater than the sum of themselves but don't have much control over how, or if, this happens. Recklessly, we let loose with music, and the words of hymns, the psalms, canticles and prayers. We cast the Word of God out into the world, into each human heart, where, to paraphrase the prophet Isaiah, it needs to go to fulfill God's purpose. Isaiah uses the metaphor of rain to convey this—rain that disappears into the ground for a time, so that we can't see it working. And then, it bears abundantly.—*from* Amazing Grace: A Vocabulary of Faith *by Kathleen Norris*

Tips for song leaders

by William Eash

Twenty-five years ago, when I taught at a small high school, a student in my freshman music class asked to speak with me. This student, unlike most of his peers, had little experience in music. He could not read it, and his voice could not match pitch. He asked if he would be selected for the concert choir, our only auditioned ensemble. I gently informed him that with his skills it would not be possible. Seeing his interest in singing and at his insistence, I suggested that we meet 15 minutes each day to talk about music symbols and teach the voice and the ear how to match pitch. This student's skills grew, and he joined the concert choir two years later. I have never forgotten the willingness and energy he dedicated to pursuing his desire to sing.

Every Sunday morning we join a worshiping community that sings. However, unlike the student, we often fail to recognize the difficulty of our task. In a four-minute span of singing a hymn we watch the song leader, listen to other singers and read notes, rhythms, parts and texts. At the same time, we (maybe) think about the theology. If it is a new hymn, we attempt to do all the above while learning new notes, new harmonies and new rhythms. When we succeed at this complex task, we celebrate the church and schoolteachers who taught us the value of singing and its importance in the worship experience.

Effective song leading requires hard work and a passion for congregational singing that leads and encourages others to actively participate in the worship life of the church.

Leading congregational singing is a difficult, complex and important task. Effective song leaders are conversant in many different musical styles and are able to conduct all meters, including hymns

with no meter. They are also expected to engage and encourage all members. In many congregations, song leaders are not part of the worship planning or involved in the choice of hymns, yet their role in the service is intimately connected with the success of the worship experience.

Effective song leading requires hard work and a passion for congregational singing that leads and encourages others to actively participate in the worship life of the church. An effective song leader understands the rudiments of music and is able to use basic conducting patterns with confidence and certainty.

Effective leaders are passionate about the hymns they lead and understand the text, its history and how the text and music are connected. Effective leaders understand the congregation's musical tastes and recognize its strengths and weaknesses. By encouraging these strengths, leaders are able to challenge the congregation to expand its selection of hymns and styles of singing so that the music is both strengthened and more inclusive. Last of all, a good song leader shows a willingness to learn so that he or she can improve and become an even better leader.

Although having all these characteristics can

Leading congregational singing is a difficult, complex and important task.

lead to the creation of good song leaders, having all these elements is not imperative to good song leading. However all leaders must improve their leading by diligently preparing to lead.

Song leaders can develop and challenge their musical skills by preparing the music, listening to the congregation, listening to the music and experimenting a bit.

Here are some suggestions:

1. Prepare: Study the hymns you will lead. Practice until you are able to sing the melody by yourself without accompaniment. The more comfortable you become with your voice, the more confidently you will lead.

Study the conducting patterns that will be required when leading the hymns. Practice those patterns throughout the week whenever you wish to "take a break." Become so familiar with the patterns that you can converse and conduct at the same time.

Buy *Hymnal Companion* (available from Faith & Life Resources, 800-245-7894); study the text and history of each hymn you will lead. Consider using some of this history in hymn introductions if the comments fit into the flow of worship.

Think through the mechanics of your leading within the context of the service:

- Do you need to announce the hymn number, or is the number printed in the bulletin?
- If there is an instrumental introduction, how long is it and what does it sound like?
- Will the dynamics and tempo remain the same throughout the hymn, or does the text imply changes? If the musical elements change, how will the changes occur?
- If instruments are used, how will they be incorporated?
- Where will you stand so everyone can see?
- Do you need to ask the congregation to stand or sit?

2. Listen to the congregation: Find someone who understands music and is willing to provide direct and honest feedback.

Ask your pastor for a response to your leading.

3. Listen to the music: Evaluate hymn singing on a weekly basis. Because congregational singing can always improve, analyze elements that need to change and work to make change happen.

Don't be afraid to ask the instrumentalists to follow you. Pulse is the most important aspect of all music; all participants must work together.

Don't be afraid to engage the nonsinger. Everyone can sing, and everyone must be encouraged to participate.

4. Experiment: When you are confident as a leader and the congregation trusts you (and not before), experiment. Change the dynamics and tempos of verses within the hymn. Alter your leading style. Change your conducting. Change the use of your voice.

If you choose or are asked to introduce new music into the life of the church, choose wisely. Make certain the melody is easily singable and that the theology of the text supports the theology of the congregation.

Know new music well before teaching it to the congregation. Professional teachers can help you develop and implement a teaching strategy if you are unable or uncomfortable in a teaching situation.

Congregational singing needs to be cultivated and nurtured. Good musical leadership should be a process led by example without interference from personality.

Congregational singing needs to be actively cultivated and nurtured. Good musical leadership should be a process led by example without interference from personality. Leaders need to be constantly selfless, nurturing and not afraid to do the hard task. In his 1904 *Letters to a Young Poet*, German poet Franz Maria Rilke reminded an aspiring young poet of the difficulty of work: "People have oriented all their solutions toward the easy and toward the easiest side of the easy; but it is clear that we must hold to what is difficult; everything alive holds to it, everything in nature grows and defends itself in its own way and is characteristically and spontaneously itself, seeks at all costs to be so and against all opposition. … For one human being to love another: That is perhaps the most difficult of all our tasks, the ultimate, the last test and proof, the work for which all other work is but preparation."

Singing is a difficult and complex task. Song leading is even more difficult, for so much responsibility for worship lies within the sung word. As a skill, song must be nurtured and cultivated. Without the diligent guidance of good song leaders and congregations who believe in outstanding congregational singing, the art of four-part singing will become obsolete. When a complex task disappears, it may never be resurrected.

William Eash is professor of music and director of choral activities at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. He is a member of Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita, Kan.

Messiah

Handel's oratorio raises many questions about how churches relate to music.

by Glenn Lehman

From the libretto alone, one could hardly reconstruct the birth, crucifixion or resurrection of Jesus. I don't blame Handel. He just wrote the tunes.

After 262 years, the oratorio *Messiah* still pulls crowds. Is it the music? The lyrics? Do we love it because we know it? It's complex.

I first heard this piece on Leonard Bernstein's double-LP album when it came out circa 1957, packaged as a Christmas work. A few years later I held the whole score in my hands. What Bernstein had passed off to me as Christmas music appeared to be something else. What?

I studied the score and concluded that it was a Passion and Easter piece. I convinced my first community choir to sing more than just the first section and to perform it around Easter.

Now I'm not so sure. Is it really an Easter piece? Who plucketh off whose hair? Who was crucified? Why? When? By whom? What were his or her last words? Where are Judas, Pilot, Peter and Mary? Do the women find an empty tomb? Where are the key words, such as denial, death, crucified, buried and risen?

complex

I think, Why not let people sing it in December if Malachi, shepherds and angels can do Christmas for them? Oratorios were made for people, not people for oratorios. Yet how Christmas is the so-called Christmas section? Where are the Magi? The innkeeper? Herod? The flight to Egypt? The slaughter of the boys? Mary and Elizabeth? The manger? Joseph's dream? John the Baptist and Zachariah? Bethlehem? The newborn?

Call me slow. I'm still trying to figure out the Old Testament poetry, some quoted in the New Testament. From the libretto alone, one could hardly reconstruct the birth, crucifixion or resurrection of Jesus. I don't blame Handel. He just wrote the tunes. His opera career dried up, he found a new line in religious oratorio, which is pretty much opera without the costumes, staging and acting.

The lyrics were assembled in 1741 by Charles Jennens, an English aristocrat, not mainstream Church of England but a member of what came to be known as High Church. He coproduced three other works with Handel: *Saul*, *l'Allegro* and *Belshazzar*. Perhaps Jennens called his libretto *Messiah* instead of *The Messiah* because it examines the concept of a messiah. We might rename it *Messiah Complex*. It paints broad strokes about hope, pain, death, resurrection, redemption and rip-roaring apocalyptic scenarios. The incarnate specifics of Jesus' life don't figure in it. Could that be its power? While we listen to "despised and rejected," "man of sorrows" and "with his stripes we are healed," we are thinking about the human experience of our lives and the lives of Ghandi and King and grandma and other, local suffering saints.

As we plan what ministry our congregation-sponsored music might render, would we expect this nonstory in an ancient dialect to tell people what Christmas and Easter really are?

Although Jennens used (with a few changes) the best translation he had, the Authorized Version of King James was already 130 years old. There would not be another standard one for 200 years.

As we plan what ministry our congregation-sponsored music might render, would we expect this nonstory in an ancient dialect to tell people what Christmas and Easter really are? Should music leaders ever reject a piece for its lyrics alone? Unfortunately, the popularity of the music perpetuates some mistranslations.

Right at the beginning, the text begs for program notes for clarification. "Comfort ye my people" does not mean take comfort, but "comfort my people." Why? "Her warfare is accomplished." She won the war? No. The Babylonian exile is over. "Her term of service is over."

We go from the angels singing the Gloria to "the government shall be upon his shoulder," surely pleasing to King George II, who (perhaps thinking it was over) got up to stretch his legs or to show appreciation at the end of the second section. Isaiah 9:6 is not government but authority. "Company of the preachers" could translate just as well as "company of women."

After vigilant music directors parry off mistletoe and Yule logs from their season's choices, must they relent on a masterpiece and require the choir to sing "good will towards men"? We know the better translation is: "To those with whom he is pleased." "Sons of Levi," ditto. Most scholars concede that "virgin shall conceive" is better rendered, "young woman shall conceive." "Behold, your king cometh unto thee" omits the crucial "on a donkey," which revises the meaning. "He shall speak peace to the heathen" (Zechariah 9:9, 10) is not 19th-century missionary condescension but "your king will make peace among the nations," after a program of disarmament.

Perhaps we hear manger, wise men and inn, so often they become clichés. In that case a fresh dose

Continued on page 16

Continued from page 15

of poetry not about snow and reindeer may bless us. Christmas perhaps has a role in letting our imaginations fly free: Three ships come sailing in, partridges sit in pear trees, apple trees act as Christ metaphors.

Abigail Adams, wife of the second U.S. president, heard *Messiah* performed at Westminster Abbey in 1785 (part of the mammoth Handel Commemorative Festival at the centennial of his birth—it had its colonial debut in 1770—and wrote to Thomas Jefferson, who was in Paris thanking the French army for helping our colonial troops beat the English, that the experience was "sublime beyond description." She at times "fancied myself amongst the higher order of beings" (*John Adams* by David McCullough). In fact, she was among elite English beings on the cusp of ruling most of the world.

Rising at the Hallelujah Chorus, I enjoy the change of posture and the coming break in the program, but I can't forget those colonial spirits of yore who thought the peace of their kingly government was what God ordained for the heathen. If we're going to stand for the brilliant chorus, why not kneel for "He was despised" and raise our hands for "Worthy is the Lamb," and clap along with "Amen."

If we want musical style to trump lyrics in our art music, then we have no case to limit the use of contemporary choruses when what is happening is musical style over-ruling the lyrics.

Can our modest congregational music budgets enrich our communities by having the church produce masterpieces of European lineage? This masterpiece—the music at least—may be the sole chance in many communities to rally diverse people around art (as opposed to folk and informal) music, even if we have to hire someone who can sing 24 notes on "-joice" or "shake" before moving on to the next word or 37 notes on "A-" before getting to the "-men."

But masterpieces, like megavitamins, cannot make up for a year of otherwise slovenly musical diets. Musical languages ought to be consonant with the rest of our personality, not an occasion to wear a tux and feel ritzy. Our pastors and outreach committees are pleased to see the unchurched crowd a *Messiah* concert can pull in, but what have we said to them? With all the Hebrew text, Handel does not give the slightest hint of Jewish music, or of Gregorian chant, which would connect the texts to their Christian origins. With what little resources we churches have to enter the musical fray in our culture, we seem inclined either to pull out the old chestnuts like *Messiah*, shibboleths akin to Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, or overreach for the most exotic or contemporary, remote music or feature a continent of the year. We comport these about as comfortably as a heavy 19th-century opera costume. Either way, we enter our community stage with a mask, tending to misrepresent who we really are. Church musicians and musical pastors have a difficult task peeling away the layers of pretense. After *Messiah*, we sure had a good musical time, but are we closer to knowing what our specific Messiah is really like.

Of course we consider lyrics when choosing music. If we want musical style to trump lyrics in our art music, then we have no case to limit the use of contemporary choruses when what is happening is musical style overruling the lyrics. In each case, will people come for the music and go away with the words? John Newton, author of "Amazing Grace" and a contemporary of George Handel, did not think so. Sounding puritanical to my ears, Newton feared that the holy texts were serving mainly as a vehicle for the music. Thus, he feared sacred music was equated with entertainment. I hear the same charge leveled against songs that have contemporary words.

It's complex, this *Messiah* thing. Acknowledging the risks, a faithful congregation ought to be a secure place to understand and preserve beauty of previous ages. But it should also be a haven for the contemporary hymn writers and new composers.

Summary? I still say, Do it at Easter. And be liberal with program notes.

Glenn Lehman is a member of East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Tuning the piano

ArtToday, Inc.

by Jean Janzen

He tunes but seldom plays,
asking me to test his work

with Chopin or a bit of jazz
when he is done. His ear

still true for pitch, as we
swap stories. This time Japan

from which I have just returned.
Three days after Nagasaki's bombing

he was sent in to search
through the rubble for prisoners

of war. His arms are knobby
with radiation scars, the only one

from his platoon still alive.
He remembers the Japanese school children

who, seeing the soldiers approach,
assumed they would be killed.

The teacher commanded them to sing—
"Sing into the face of death!"

And so they sang, terrified, until
the soldiers laid down their guns.

Fifty years later he can play
the tune still, and he does.

Jean Janzen lives in Fresno, Calif.

Leadership that empowers others

Keith Harder is co-director of the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board Office of Ministerial Leadership.

Since our three children have left home and started their own families, our family has not always known what to expect of each other. As a result we have had some breakdowns in communication and uncertainty about how we will relate to one another in the future.

Last Christmas we took an important step toward more open communication. After we ate a meal together, one of our daughters gingerly opened up a conversation about our communication and relationships. This grew into a two-hour exchange in which we freely expressed our thoughts, feelings and hopes for our family. At one point I noted to myself that I had not started this discussion and that we parents were most definitely not in charge of it. It seemed that everyone was taking ownership for their thoughts and feelings and was contributing to the process. Everyone was acting on the responsibility and power that was theirs by virtue of being members of the family. It felt we were in this family together in a new way.

This experience led me to ponder how people are empowered to grow in their ability to take risks and more responsibility and how leadership contributes or detracts from this happening. I have been slow in learning that how I exercise leadership affects whether people will act on their own power and responsibility. When I try to force a predetermined outcome on others, people shrink back from taking risks and doing more. Some let me overfunction and have my way; others resist and fight for their piece of the action. Neither response is empowering or life-giving.

This insight has emerged as I face my need for control and my tendency to overfunction. I am learning that when I become willful, others feel stifled and tend not to grow in their responsibility and empowerment. This awareness has come partly from understanding dynamics rooted in my family of origin and partly from my family and co-workers' feedback. I do not want to control and stifle others, but when I am in a leadership role, forces at work within me make me vulnerable to becoming anxious, willful and controlling.

Leadership that empowers others has become a common theme in literature and seminars. One potential problem with this idea is that it may subtly convey that leaders have power others do not have and that they need to magnanimously share with those without power.

While leaders often have power and influence to create opportunities and environments in which others feel safe using their gifts and taking risks, we all have gifts and personal power, even though we do not always know how to use them. Leaders empower others not by passing on their power but by evoking and freeing the gifts, power and responsibility within every person.

Leaders can take practical steps to evoke gifts, power and responsibility in others. They can engage others in responsibilities and tasks that will stretch and engage their gifts, even when leaders think they can do the job better themselves.

Leaders can take practical steps to evoke gifts, power and responsibility in others. They can engage others in responsibilities and tasks that will stretch and engage their gifts, even when leaders think they can do the job better themselves. They can take on a teaching and coaching function to equip others to take on leadership and greater responsibility. They can get out of the way and encourage others to take leadership and exercise their gifts. Leaders can also ask for feedback about whether others are free to take risks and energized through their leadership.

Another picture of how this might look came to me as I witnessed the skilled leadership of a song leader. She led us by telling us which song to sing, gave us the pitch and kept us singing in the same tempo. She also energized our singing with her facial expressions and obvious joy in leading our singing. She led us in making beautiful music. May leaders throughout the church help us make music that enriches each person, nourishes our life together and empowers our witness. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Gone looking for his friends**—Elaine Maust
- **Two sides of the cross**—Jim Klassen
- **A day paralyzed**—Jennifer Ebenshade

Courtesy photo

Laura Gaugler (wearing white scarf), one of 10 seniors from Christopher Dock Mennonite High School in Lansdale, Pa., enjoys a moment of joy with a Honduran boy during a footwashing service led by her mission team in Honduras.

Mission trip turns into footwashing

Ten high school seniors spend week cleaning children's infected feet.

Footwashing will never be the same for high school senior Laura Gaugler, who met children without shoes during a Honduran mission trip in January.

"I'll never forget how they giggled about my white feet when I took off my shoes," she says, "or how they grinned so big during this simple little service. I couldn't understand anything they said, but I sure understood the joy we all felt."

Now when Gaugler participates in footwashing services in her congregation, Bally (Pa.) Mennonite Church, with familiar hymns filling the sanctuary, she remembers the skinny children walking muddy streets, and it is different. She remembers how she cleaned the infected wounds on children's feet, mindful that the mud contained parasites that burrow into their skin and how she received smiles as pay for bandages and love. She remembers that in having the children wash her white, unscarred feet with their brown, malnourished hands, she came home marked forever.

"During devotions one night [during the mission trip], we talked about how we'd been cleaning dirty feet all week and wouldn't it be neat to end our time with a footwashing service," said Gaugler, who helped to organize the trip sponsored by MAMA Project Inc., a nonprofit ministry supported by congregations in Franconia Mennonite Conference (FMC) and Eastern District Conference.

Footwashing symbolized the entire trip, during which Gaugler and nine other senior girls from Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, in Lansdale, Pa., spent seven days in poor neighborhoods near Santa Rita and San Francisco de Yojoa. They helped Priscilla Benner, a physician and MAMA' s director and founder, run medical clinics, give nutritional information and provide Vitamin A and deworming medicine.

The 10 seniors and group co-leaders Benner and Marlene Frankenfield, Christopher Dock's campus pastor and FMC's youth minister, provided medical care, made new friends, played games with children and interacted with families. In the evenings, the tired work team shared devotions and connected what they had seen and felt each day with their ideas about faith and service.

"I told the seniors that the whole seven days was one big footwashing experience," says Frankenfield, co-leading her second trip to Honduras with Christopher Dock seniors. "I reminded them it wasn't just about giving to the people and washing their feet but also learning to receive and having their own feet washed, as well."

Inspiring this mutuality is Benner's driving passion. She runs a medical clinic in Pennsburg, Pa., and is a member of Shalom Christian Fellowship in East Greenville, Pa. Benner hopes that by exposing young people to these moments of poverty, they will become wise decision-makers in their congregations and make justice a way of life.

"I hope that 50 years down the road," Benner says, "when these women attend a business meeting about whether to cut the mission budget or buy new red carpet for the sanctuary, they will remember these children."—*Laurie L. Oswald, Mennonite Church USA News Service*

I hope 50 years down the road, when these women attend a business meeting about whether to cut the mission budget or buy new carpet for the sanctuary, they will remember these children.
—Priscilla Benner

Leaders in Spain ask for mission workers

Goal is to increase the number of believers to 500 in 12 congregations by 2025.

During an emotional meeting at Mennonite World Conference in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, last summer, Dennis Byler shared the vision of Spain's Anabaptist churches with a group of Latin Americans.

Import [leadership into Spain] or face "the disappearance of a specifically Anabaptist witness."
—Dennis Byler

After first acknowledging the pain that Spain has caused Latin America in the past, he asked for assistance in building up the Mennonite witness in Spain by sending mission workers and praying. Tears flowed as prayers were lifted and many of the delegates from Latin America shared their own vision and calling for ministry in Spain.

Anabaptist leaders in Spain have a vision based on multiplication: Take five churches with 160 baptized believers and increase the numbers to 12 churches with 500 believers by the year 2025. In order to work toward this goal, they have issued an invitation for mission investment in Spain to their fellow believers in North America, Latin America and Europe.

"The veneer of pseudo-Christian piety with which Europeans for so many centuries covered their deeply pagan faith and lifestyles has finally peeled away," said Byler, long-term Mennonite Mission Network worker in Spain. "Anyone who does invest in missions in Spain must do so in the awareness that Spain is a deeply secularized society, profoundly cynical about Christianity, individualistic to a fault and therefore slow to make any kind of commitment."

Courtesy photo

These Anabaptist leaders in Spain are asking for mission workers from North American to create a "self-sustaining, self-replicating Anabaptist presence in the country."

While the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ congregations are currently seeing their numbers grow in Spain, they have few resources to work at church planting or leadership training.

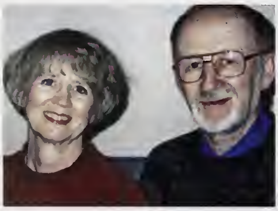
"It is my hope that the churches in North and South America will receive this invitation from our handful of Anabaptists in Spain as something of a 'Macedonian call,'" said Byler, citing Paul's vision in Acts 16 that carried the gospel into Europe.

Byler said the hoped-for numbers would be the minimum requirement for a self-sustaining, self-replicating Anabaptist presence in the country. Otherwise, he said, the denomination must rely on imported leadership or face "the disappearance of a specifically Anabaptist witness lived out in local congregations in the country."—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Harders' return to Congo is sign of hope

Congolese represent 15 percent of worldwide Mennonite population

After living in Minnesota for the past decade, Arnold and Grace Harder returned to the Democratic Republic of Congo, the country they called home for almost 20 years. They have settled into a once rundown house that has been transformed into a welcoming place through Arnold's skilled hands. They watch the dusty yard in Kinshasa, the capital city, become a grassy lawn and observe flowering plants creating a beautiful tapestry on the cement brick walls surrounding their compound. They also see the Congolese church—15 percent of the worldwide Mennonite population—as a lush garden growing despite decades of governmental turmoil and corruption.


Grace and Arnold Harder

"After several years with no resident mission workers from the United States, the Congolese Christians applaud the return of North American Mennonites," says Harder. "We have been humbled by their generosity in welcoming us."

The Harders are serving with Mennonite Mission Network through Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission in a "presence ministry" in partnership with Central Plains Mennonite Conference.

Although they live in one of Africa's largest countries and, potentially, one of its richest with fertile soil and extensive mineral resources, the majority of the Congolese live in abject poverty.

"There are down times when the magnitude of needs in this city seem overwhelming, and we wonder how we can even begin to make a difference," Arnold Harder says.

But the Harders' return is a sign of hope to Congolese believers that God's community stretches beyond national boundaries.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

EMM worker wounded by gunshot

Outpouring of support from Birmingham, Ala., for YES team members

Melissa Meserole, leader of a five-member Youth Evangelism Service (YES) team in Birmingham, Ala., sponsored by Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) was shot in her right side around 2 a.m., Feb. 24. She was returning from a late-night prayer meeting at Service In Christ, a local parachurch organization.

According to the police report, as Meserole walked from her van to the YES team's home in the Avondale/Tom Brown Village housing project, two men, apparently attempting auto theft, approached her and demanded that she remove the anti-theft device on the steering wheel. As she turned to comply with their demands, they shot her and ran.

Meserole managed to walk into the house. Team member Randy Keener, who witnessed the incident, took her to St. Vincent's Hospital. She underwent emergency surgery to remove the bullet which mildly lacerated her liver. Meserole was released from the hospital after six days and is recuperating in her home community of Oklahoma City.

EMM staff members Sherrie Ober, associate director for human resources, and Doreen Ebersole, director of the Harrisburg (Pa.) Discipleship Center where YES teams are trained, flew to Birmingham the afternoon of Feb. 24 for support and assessment.

Since the incident, team members have experienced an outpouring of support from the community in which they live and from wider Birmingham.

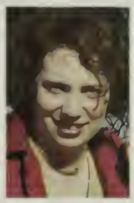
"We're not done yet," says the team as they testify to an ongoing sense of call. Their eight-month assignment is scheduled to end in July.

The YES team moved to Birmingham in November 2003; they have been working with New Creation Ministries, a church plant and youth-children's ministry led by Mike and Cynthia Jennings. Mike Jennings reported that the church plant, affiliated with Good News Fellowship, was burglarized twice in the 36 hours following the shooting.

Following an estimated four-week recovery period, Meserole hopes to return to Birmingham as team leader. The other team members are continuing their work and have moved to stay with host families. New Creation Ministries helps arrange community service assignments—in place of jail terms—for juvenile offenders and provide short-term housing and parental care for children at risk.

"We're sobered by this unfortunate event, which reminds us anew of the pain and suffering in our world," says Mike Gingerich, program director for Discipleship Ministries, which administers the YES program. "We will continue to send and support teams to serve in mission … doing our best to ensure safety while at the same time knowing there is a cost to discipleship."

Other YES team members include Russell Kanagy from Williston, S.C.; Randy Keener from Lebanon, Pa.; Alisha Risser from Broadway, Va., and Liz Yocom from Millersville, Pa.—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions News Service*



Amos Stoltzfus

Melissa Meserole

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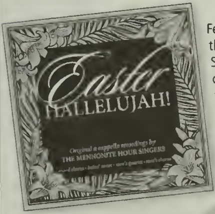

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Joel Fath

Culture shock for 'Amish in the City'

Goshen College professor says Amish youth on show would be atypical.

Because the Amish emphasize separation from the world and not isolation, naive youths will be difficult to find.
—Steve Nolt

"Amish in the City" is the prospective title for United Paramount Network's (UPN) proposed reality television series. The series will potentially feature five 16-year-old Amish youth—who at that age traditionally enter a coming-of-age time called "rumspringa"—living in a city with five mainstream teens. A Pennsylvania Dutch word that means "running around," rumspringa is a time for Amish teenagers to participate in a phase of exploration before deciding whether or not to be baptized into the church.

Leslie Moonves, CBS' leader who oversees UPN, anticipates that watching inexperienced Amish youths will be choice entertainment.

"To have people who don't have television walk down Rodeo Drive and be freaked out by what they see, I think will be interesting television," he says.

The new series came about partially in response to the success of Fox's recent hit show, "The Simple Life," in which pop icons Paris Hilton and Nicole Richie live on a farm in Arkansas, much to the fascination of millions of viewers. Moonves claims that, similarly, "Amish in the City" would be based on culture shock, not religion.

But Steve Nolt, Goshen (Ind.) College's associate professor of history, says that UPN is in for a disappointment, mainly due to misconceptions about Amish communities. Nolt explained that rumspringa is not a time when all Amish youth run wild, drink and drive cars as implied by UPN's press conference and publicity about the show.

"The general tradition is that after age 16, the Amish join a young people's group and engage in unsupervised—as in not supervised by their parents—socializing. This [behavior] can range from very benign to highly deviant," Nolt says.

However, behavior that drastically strays from the children's parents and the Amish church is uncommon.

"It is rare that the children move away from their parents' home during this time," Nolt said, "especially since most intend to save money, stay with the church, get married and then move away from home."

Nolt does not believe that UPN will find the subjects it seeks: Amish youths who have been isolated from the mainstream world and who will have extreme reactions to society.

"If they find people who are willing to do this, they will find people who are atypical to begin with," he says. Nolt explained that because the Amish emphasize separation from the world and not isolation, naive youths will be difficult to find.

"Separation happens at many different levels; sometimes it's symbolic. … They're not going to find kids who've never seen a television," he says.

Jamin Yoder, a Goshen College junior who belongs to the Beachy Amish church, also believes that UPN has misconceptions about Amish familiarity with modern society.

"I think all Amish have been exposed to the outside world by this time in their life. I don't think [the youth] will be surprised by what they encounter," he says.—*Elise Hofer, reprinted from Goshen College* Record

Deaf player leads Hesston team

Chelsea Jackson sits at front of the classroom to read her professors' lips.

Chelsea Jackson dribbles the ball up the floor for Hesston College.

Larry Bartel

To see Chelsea Jackson on the floor of a basketball court with her Hesston (Kan.) College teammates, you'd never know that—beyond her talents as a basketball player—there is anything unusual about her. The freshman point guard from Thomas, Okla., is Hesston's leading scorer. And she is deaf.

Named Oklahoma's Female High School Athlete of the Year in 2003, Jackson could have joined the University of Oklahoma's team as a walk-on, but she chose Hesston with little hesitation "because of all the wonderful things I heard about it."

"Hesston has a student-teacher relationship that not very many other schools have—a family atmosphere where everyone takes care of each other," she says, "And because of the coach [Joel Kauffman] I felt like this was a great place to play ball."

"I wondered how it would work," Kauffman says. "How would I communicate with her on the floor? But she is one of the most intuitive players I've ever seen. She picks up things on the floor incredibly quickly. Usually she's looking at me when she knows I need to be talking to her."

Everyone who knows Chelsea says she is "amazing" at reading lips.

"She is able to communicate from across the court," says freshman forward Jenny Boyts. "She knows so much about this game that it is very easy to play with her."

Not only her teammates talk about how easy it is to relate to Jackson.

"Sometimes I just forget that she is deaf," says Alex Roth, her roommate," because we have completely normal conversations, although I do notice that when I come in late I can make all the noise I want and she never stirs."

Jackson says she is enjoying Hesston socially, academically and spiritually. She is taking biblical literature this semester.

"Oh my word, I have really loved that class big time," she says, "because of how much we focus on the Bible. It has helped me with my relationship with God and helped me realize how we never know what happens next. Just focus on today. Don't worry about every little thing."

Jackson sits at the front of the classroom so that she can read the professor's lips; sometimes she gets people to take notes for her. She is majoring in pharmacy.

"I love chemistry, I love to help people, and I love to learn big words."

What she loves most about Hesston is the atmosphere on campus: "No matter where you go, everyone says, 'Hi, Chelsea. How are you?'"

—Melanie Zuercher, a freelance writer in Hesston, Kan.

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Axness, Emma Allene, Jan. 11, to Cory and Andrea Steiner Axness, Glendale, Ariz.

Bermudez, Lucila Raye, Feb. 4, to Brant and Jamie Chisum Bermudez, Phoenix.

Cancienne, Brody Lloyd, Jan. 12, to Alan and Julie Cortez Cancienne, Des Allemands, La.

Dreps, Thomas Becker, Feb. 12, to Chris Dreps and Sylvia Becker, Durham, N.C.

Edwards, Emma Dawn, Jan. 16, to Randy and Jenel Rupp Edwards, Wichita, Kan.

Epp, Isaac Neal, Jan. 29, to Greg and Dawn Bever Epp, Wichita, Kan.

Friesen, Blake Jaymes, Feb. 9, to Kevin and Stephanie Ediger Friesen, Henderson, Neb.

Garber, Caleb Christian, Feb. 18, to Gyles and Katherine Klassen Garber, Newton, Kan.

Hiebner, Mason Troy, Feb. 12, to Troy and Corianne Kroeker Hiebner, Henderson, Neb.

Janzen, Juniper Joanne, Feb. 10, to Jeremy and Jennifer Janzen, Steinbach, Man.

Kaufman, Morgan Victoria, Jan. 16, to Kim Kaufman, Goshen, Ind.

Koshmider, Olivia Renea, Jan. 31, to Wayne and Glenda Miller Koshmider, Goshen, Ind.

Krehbiel, Jasper Elijah Hochstetler, Feb. 6, to Travis Krehbiel and Carrie Hochstetler, Moundridge, Kan.

Lehman, Karey Dean Wenger, Jan. 19, to Lance and Krista Wenger Lehman, Apple Creek, Ohio.

Martin, Caitlin Nguyen, Feb. 3, to Rodney and Angie Burkholder Martin, Lititz, Pa.

Mast, Caleb Andrew, Feb. 5, to Mark and Dawn Culbertson Mast, Harrisonburg, Va.

Meharry, Melodie Elizabeth, Jan. 7, to Kevan and Charity Stewart Meharry, Mesa, Ariz.

Neufeld-Wall, Sadie Hope, Jan. 2, to Scott and Mary Beth Neufeld-Wall, St. Louis, Mo.

Oostland, Jenna Margriet, Feb. 6, to Jan and Audrey Mast Oostland, Goshen, Ind.

Paez, Lexy Olivia, Feb. 10, to Pablo and Hannah Peters Paez, Canby, Ore.

Sawatzky, Joel Christopher and Katharina Grace (twins), Feb. 12, to Alfred and Becky Pfaltzgraff Sawatzky, Denver, Colo.

Trammell, Jaden Rose, Feb. 19, to Jason and Flavia Widmer Trammell, Fresno, Calif.

Veurink, Anna Jo, Jan. 13, to Lynn and Mary Jo Beiler Veurink, Hendersonville, N.C.

Walker, Mora Zhao, Nov. 22, to Ed and Lili Zhao Walker, Phoenix.

Wireman, James Paul and Shelby Grace (twins), Feb. 15, to James and Melissa Maggio Wireman, Washington, Ill.

MARRIAGES

Beauregard/Bender: Espri Beauregard, Paoli, Ind., and Darren Bender, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 27 in Paoli, Ind.

Frey/Koehn: Eric Frey, North Newton, Kan., and Sarah Koehn, Dighton, Kan., Sept. 21 at a pasture near Dighton.

DEATHS

Boshart, Omar D., 70, Wood River, Neb., died Jan. 31. Spouse: Merna Stutzman Boshart. Parents: Amos and Sarah Stutzman Boshart. Children: Jayne Yoder, Terry, Craig, Chad; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 5 at Cairo (Neb.) United Methodist Church.

Culp, Hazel E. Perry, 92, Elkhart, Ind., died Feb. 3 of a stroke. Spouse: Ivan Culp (deceased). Parents: George and Nellie Leedy Perry. Children: Donna F. Thompson, Ivan R., Marlin J.; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 5 at Hartzler-Gutermuth-Inman Funeral Home, Elkhart.

Diffenbach, Abram, 77, Lancaster, Pa., died Feb. 2. Spouse: Beulah Diffenbach. Parents: Henry Z. and Estella Wenzel Diffenbach. Children: Abram, Rosalee Schneck, Alan, Annette Hertzler, David; 15 grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 6 at Mellinger Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

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Eby, Marian Landis, 75, Gordonville, Pa., died Feb. 9. Spouse: Menno L. Eby. Parents: Elvin and Dora Winey Landis. Children: Dennis, Doris Metzler, Jane Meck; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 14 at Hershey Mennonite Church, Kinzers, Pa.

Flaming, Evelyn Graevs, 67, Topeka, Kan., died Jan. 11 of cancer. Spouse: Marvin Flaming. Parents: Ferdinand and Katherine Schroeder Graevs. Funeral: Jan. 14 at Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka.

Friesen, John T., 92, Henderson, Neb., died Feb. 5. Spouse: Marie Friesen. Parents: Thomas H. and Katharina Klippenstein Friesen. Children: Rubena Hiebner, Myrna Johnson, Mary Claassen, Don J., Amanda Rempel, Mel, Vern; 21 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 9 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Friesen, Tina Peters, 83, Henderson, Neb., died Feb. 16. Spouse: Albert D. Friesen. Parents: Isaac and Tina Penner Peters. Children: Robert, Vernette, Lyle, Galen, Curtis, Alton; 14 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 19 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Gascho, Stanley L., 78, Pigeon, Mich., died Jan. 30. Spouse: Iva C. Swartzendruber Gascho (deceased). Parents: Nicholas and Melinda Brenneman Gascho. Children: June Ramos, Eugene, Lee; six grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 1 in Pigeon.

Gehman, Mark C., 75, Bechtelsville, Pa., died Feb. 5 of cancer. Spouse: Grace Yoder Gehman. Parents: Jacob and Katie Clemens Gehman. Children: Jay, Faith Adams, Phil, Brian, Tim, Hope VerMulm, Joy; 17 grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 9 at Boyertown (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Glick, Verna, 88, Ephrata, Pa., died Jan. 25. Spouse: S. Roy Glick (deceased). Parents: Aaron and Kathryn Petersheim Mast. Children: Richard, Shirley Wenger, Victor. Funeral: Feb. 1 at Conestoga Mennonite Church, Morgantown, Pa.

Goertz, Harold E., 83, Inman, Kan., died Feb. 16. Spouse: Wilma Neufeld Goertz (deceased). Parents: David P. and Helen Ediger Goertz. Children: James, Paul, Mark; four grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 20 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman.

Good, Minnie, 95, Ephrata, Pa., died Feb. 3. Spouse: (1st) Irvin M. Holsopple (deceased), (2nd) Howard Z. Good (deceased). Parents: Benjamin and Annie Oberholtzer Eberly. Children: 17 stepchildren; 110 step-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 7 at Lititz (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Guengerich, Verna Enns, 93, Denver, Colo., died Feb. 3. Spouse: Willard Guengerich. Parents: Isaac P. and Katherine F. Unger Enns. Children: Vernard, Elaine Kauffman, Joelene Johnson, Genelle (deceased); six grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: Feb. 7 in Glenwood, Colo.

Hostetler, Fern Baker, 66, Westover, Md., died Jan. 16 of cancer. Spouse: Norman Hostetler. Parents: Melvin and Minnie Baker. Children: Tim, Patricia Kratz, Lenora Kerstetter, Jeff; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 21 at Holly Grove Mennonite Church, Westover.

Krauter, Christian Frederick, 88, Donnellson, Iowa, died Jan. 6. Spouse: Vesta May Lowenberg Krauter. Parents: Jacob J. and Matilda Schnierle Krauter. Children: Edward, Kristi Keller, Stephen, Donna Vogel; 10 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 9 at Zion Mennonite Church, Donnellson.

Landis, Paul D., 73, Hatfield, Pa., died Jan. 30. Parents: Howard and Martha Diller Landis. Funeral: Feb. 3 at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Home.

Massanari, Karl, 88, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 27. Spouse: Christine Yoder Massanari (deceased). Parents: Joe and Lizzie Sommer Massanari. Children: Ronald, Jared, Ken, Jeff; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 29 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Miller, Ida Yoder, 97, Springs, Pa., died Jan. 29. Spouse: Ralph Miller. Parents: Edward and Annie Yoder. Children: Stanley, Jane Benson, Lois Hepler, Linda Mullenex; 12 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 1 at Springs Mennonite Church.

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- **Editor@TheMennonite.org**
- **fax 574-535-6050**
- **1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794**

Miller, Rosa Lewis, Grantsville, Md., died Feb. 6. Spouse: Elmer Miller (deceased). Parents: Anthony and Nancy Lewis. Children: Nancy Miller, Rosa Ailey; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 8 at Newman Funeral Home, Grantsville.

Morrow, Theodore Eggleston, 75, Blue Bell, Pa., died Jan. 25. Spouse: (1st) Catherine Roth Morrow (deceased), (2nd) Dorcas Stolzfus Morrow. Parents: Olin and Alice Eggleston Morrow. Children: Joseph, Alice Morrow-Rowan, Mary Morrow-Farrell, Rita, Ben; five grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 29 at Methacton Mennonite Church, Norristown, Pa.

Nafziger, Sara Flisher, 90, Albany, Ore., died Jan. 28. Spouse: Wilbert Nafziger. Parents: Jacob and Ina Berry Flisher. Child: Carol Schweitzer; two grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 30 at Fairview Mennonite Church, Albany.

Nafziger, Wilbert, 95, Albany, Ore., died Feb. 8. Spouse: Sara Flisher Nafziger (deceased). Parents: Christian and Lydia Birkey Nafziger. Child: Carol Schweitzer; two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 12 at Fairview Mennonite Church, Albany.

Neufeldt, Esther Kroeker Schmidt, 95, Buhler, Kan., died Feb. 12. Spouse: (1st) Eldo Schmidt (deceased), (2nd) Marvin Neufeldt (deceased). Parents: George and Agnes Rempel Kroeker. Child: Clifford Schmidt; step-children Robert, Harold, Donna Neufeldt Swartzendruber; two grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 16 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Penner, Zelma "Sally" Goertzen, 85, North Newton, Kan., died Feb. 23. Spouse: Wilbert Penner (deceased). Parents: Gerhard and Susanna Penner Goertzen. Children: Barbara Esau, Patricia Hinds, Douglas; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 26 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Schmidt, Lucille Newland, 81, Reedley, Calif., died Jan. 30 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: (1st) Walter Johnson (deceased), (2nd) Elmer Schmidt. Children: Karen Walker, Jan Clifford; four grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 9 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Schrag, Colleen Oliver, 80, Vancouver, Wash., died Feb. 4. Spouse: Leslie Schrag. Parents: Basil and Martha Oliver. Children: Lorna Fitzgerald, Rhoda Friesen; four grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 7 at Waterford Retirement Center, Vancouver.

Sewell, Hubert, 87, Priest River, Idaho, died Dec. 15. Spouse: Mary Sewell. Parents: Ward and Della Sewell. Children: Linda Jordan, Karen Noble.

Sommers, Alvin, 84, Uniontown, Ohio, died Feb. 12. Spouse: Barbara Sommers (deceased). Parents: Benjamin J. and Lena Wittmer Sommers. Children: Caroline, Ruth Miller, Martha Troyer, Sharon Lam, William, Edwin, Nelson, Floyd, Gayland, Lavern, David; 46 grandchildren; 66 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 16 at Hartville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Stoltzfus, Ida, 93, Honey Brook, Pa., died Feb. 1. Parents: Sylvan and Lydia Hartz Stoltzfus. Funeral: Feb. 5 at Conestoga Mennonite Church, Morgantown, Pa.

Strahler, Jeanne M., 64, Wichita, Kan., died Jan. 24. Children: Rudolph, Martin, Eric; five grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 28 at Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Cemetery.

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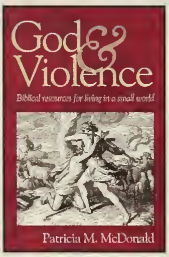

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To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Marla Cole, or email TheMennonite@TheMennonite.org.

New Dates for ***MCC's alumni celebration in Vietnam.*** MCC, VNCS and EMM alumni will celebrate 50 years of work in Vietnam on Sept. 24-26 in Hanoi, Vietnam. For more information or to register, contact Diane Gehman by email at deg@mcc.org or by mail at MCC, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501.

Hesston College seeks applicants for the position of ***admissions counselor.*** Qualifications include good communication and organizational skills, commitment to Mennonite higher education and familiarity with Mennonite Church USA. The counselor will develop and implement a territorial recruitment plan, build relationships with top prospects and applicants, telemarket, travel and represent Hesston College at churches and high schools. Bachelor's degree preferred. Position available early summer.

To apply, send resume and references to Clark Roth, Vice President for Admissions, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062. For more information, email clarkr@hesston.edu or phone 800-995-2757. Hesston College is an equal opportunity employer.

"Managing Life God's Way" is the theme of the upcoming ***spirituality retreat*** at **Spruce Lake Retreat,** April 30-May 2. Nelson Shenk, pastor of Boyertown (Pa.) Mennonite Church, will guide this spring retreat focused on spiritual refreshment and inner growth. You'll enjoy plenty of open space for your own prayer, reading and walking as well. Spruce Lake is located in the heart of Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains. For reservations call 800-822-7505.

Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio, is seeking candidates for the full-time position of ***minister of youth.*** Candidates should have strong Anabaptist beliefs and have a passion for children, youth and young adults. Full job description is available by contacting Kelvin Friesen at 419-445-0856 or kelfriesen@rtecexpress.net.

Sarasota Christian School in Sarasota, Fla., is accepting applications for the position of ***director of business services.*** This position begins with the 2004-05 academic year. The director will give oversight to the total financial operation and work closely with the development office. Contact Eugene Miller at 941-371-6481 or 5415 Bahia Vista St., Sarasota, FL 34232; email gmiller@sarasotachristian.org; Web site www.sarasotachristian.org.

Mennonite Disaster Service *communications coordinator.* Position begins May 2004. Location: Akron, Pa. The communications coordinator is responsible for management and production of MDS print and digital media. Applicants must have a communications degree or equivalent experience and excel in writing, editing, photography, desktop publishing and Web design. Compensation package includes salary with benefits. Submit resumé by March 31 to MDS Human Resources, Attn: Carla Hunt, 1018 Main St., Akron, PA 17501; email chunt@mds.mennonite.net; phone 717-859-2210; fax 717-859-4910; www.mds.mennonite.net

Locust Grove Mennonite Church is looking for two people to serve as ***church administrator*** and ***director of worship.*** These are quarter-time positions. Administrator candidates must be organized, motivated and action-oriented. Director of worship candidates must have experience with contemporary and traditional music and the ability to coordinate various elements of worship, including music, arts and multimedia. With appropriate gifts and abilities, the same person could fill both roles. If interested, contact Pastor John Troyer at john@troyernet.net; 29525 Findley Road, Burr Oak, MI 49030; 269-489-5041.

Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore., is seeking ***youth ministry candidates*** for its high-school resident program. Responsibilities include mentoring students, planning and supervising dorm activities. Two individuals, M/F or a couple are required for the weekend and a male for the weekday program.

Western, located on a beautiful 40-acre campus in the Pacific Northwest, serves students from several states and provinces and from around the world. Candidates should love youth, have a heart for missions and sharing Christ, work as part of a seven-member team and enjoy a high-energy setting. Full-time volunteer positions starting Aug. 16; volunteer benefit package. Contact Sherri-Lynn Wenger 866-343-9378 or sherriwenger@hotmail.com.

Mennonite Mission Network *Fellowship Visit to Europe* June 1-16. Explore Mission Network ministry sites and meet workers in England, France, Belgium and the Netherlands. For more information contact Diana Cook at 866-866-2872; www.MennoniteMission.net.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking qualified applicants for the position of ***director of international student services.*** Provides expertise regarding U.S. citizenship for Immigration Services regulations for international students, staff and visitors at a university recognized by NAFSA for "Internationalizing the Campus" (www.nafsa.org). Serves as PDSO and RO under SEVIS. Offers programs and services for international students, including: orientation and transitional support, needs assessment, advocacy, programming for personal growth and development, leadership development, advising of groups and individual students, and programming that promotes and deepens the EMU community's understanding of international cultural heritages. Offers caring and emotional support for international students who are far from home. Master's degree or higher in related field (preferred); or bachelor's degree and applicable experience. Eligible to administer SEVIS (per DHS, U.S. citizenship or "green card" required).

For more information visit our Web site at www.emu.edu. Send letter of application, resumé and three references to Kenneth L. Nafziger, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; fax 540-432-4444. Review will begin March 15. EMU reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. Persons who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking qualified applicants for the position of ***area coordinator.*** This is a live-in position that works with the residence life staff in a team approach to provide a safe, secure and comfortable housing and residence life environment conducive to a Christian lifestyle, the pursuit of academic excellence and personal growth for approximately 550-600 students. The position includes responsibility for supervision of community advisers, educational and social programming, personal adjustment counseling and referral, crisis intervention, student conduct, budget management and general administration of the residence hall. The position also includes assigned responsibilities for collaborative efforts in service learning and/or leadership development. Master's degree preferred. Bachelor's degree required. Minimum one-year live-in residence life experience.

For more information visit our Web site at www.emu.edu. Send letter of application, resumé and three references to Human Resources Office, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; fax 540-432-4444. Preference will be given to applications received by March 30. EMU reserves the right to fill this position before the application deadline or to extend the deadline as circumstances may warrant.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking qualified applicants for the position of ***residence director.*** Responsibility for supervision of community advisers, social and educational programming to meet students' needs, disciplinary and personal adjustment counseling and referral, crisis intervention and general administration of the residence hall. Work with other residence life staff and director of housing and residence life in team approach to residence hall management. The position requires an approximate average of 20 hours per week. Live-in position. Bachelor's degree with previous experience in residence life administration, and/or counseling with a college-age population. Master's degree in progress preferred. Graduate students welcome to apply. Previous resident assistant experience desirable.

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MCC needs an ***East Asia director*** in Akron, Pa. This person is responsible for programs and workers in Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Japan, North and South Korea and Taiwan. Experience in East Asia required, preferably at primary and management levels. Demonstrated administrative, supervisory and relational skills needed, along with a Christian faith, active church membership and commitment to nonviolent peacemaking.

Contact Charmayne Brubaker, 717-859-1151, cdb@mcc.org or your nearest MCC office for a job description. Application review begins immediately. Position available in June.

Mennonite Central Committee U.S. is looking for a visionary and energetic woman to lead the work of Women's Concerns to the next level as ***women's concerns director.*** Responsibilities include leading and overseeing domestic violence/sexual abuse programming, organizing dialogical forums on issues important to women and carrying out advocacy work on anti-sexism. These tasks provide a chance to work collaboratively with an energetic and creative peace and justice team in the Akron, Pa., office. This is a full-time position that involves some travel. Requirements include commitment to Anabaptist/Mennonite theology and practice; expertise in women's issues and peace work; strong writing, editing and speaking skills; interest and ability in networking with a broad range of constituent women and ability to work with church structures.

For more information, please contact Prem Dick, psd@mcc.org, or Anna Reimer, awr@mcc.org, 717-859-1151, MCC Human Resources Department, Akron, Pa.

Goshen College's four-year interpreter training program located in the department of modern classical languages and literatures is seeking an ***assistant professor*** for the 2004-2005 school year. Initial appointment is for a part-time position for 2004-2005 and the possibility of a full-time position the following year. Applications will be reviewed April 15 and will continue until the position is filled. Faculty responsibilities begin Aug.15. A master's degree required, Ph.D. preferred, in linguistics, education, sign language interpreting or a related field; prefer someone with multicultural experience; ASLTA certification or working toward certification. Preference will be given to candidates who exhibit both strong professional and teaching credentials with excellent aptitude and ability in second-language teaching.

To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, www.goshen.edu/employment. Women and minority persons are especially encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Administrative and teaching faculty members are expected to share this commitment.

Hesston College is reopening its search for president of the college.

Founded in 1909, Hesston College is a fully-accredited two-year liberal arts institution. Its 50-acre residential campus is located in Hesston, Kansas. Hesston College, the two-year college of Mennonite Church USA, educates and nurtures each student within Christ-centered community, integrating thought, life, and faith for service to others in the church and the world. Its 440 students come from about 30 states and 15 countries, including Canada.

The ideal candidate should have advanced academic experience, an Anabaptist Christian faith commitment, strong intellectual and relational leadership qualities, proven abilities in organizational development and fiscal management, and the ability to understand and communicate effectively with diverse constituencies.

Submit nominations and applications to Norm Yoder, Chair, Hesston Presidential Search Committee, c/o Hesston College, PO Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062, or e-mail nyoder@telcoweb.net. Include contact information for the potential candidate and rationale for the recommendation.

EOE. Persons who bring gender, ethnic, and cultural diversity are strongly encouraged to apply.

Hesston College

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Christopher Dock Mennonite High School seeks applicants for the following ***sabbatical fill-in teaching positions*** for the 2004-05 school year: physics, English (first semester) and media center director (second semester). Send resumé to Elaine A. Moyer, Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446; fax 215-362-2943; email camoyer@christopherdock.org.

Bethany Christian Schools (gr. 6-12; enrollment 315) invites applications for 2004-05 for a ***teaching position*** primarily in mathematics 7 & 8, with responsibilities in a secondary area to complete a full-time load, and for a three-quarters-time, one-year term position as teacher of high-school English. Applicants should hold, or be qualified to obtain, Indiana licensure in the primary teaching area.

Please submit a resumé and letter of application to Allan Dueck, Principal, 2904 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-5499; phone 574-534-2567; email akdueck@bethanycs.net.

Menno-Hof is accepting applications for ***volunteer host/hostess*** plus light housekeeping. Opportunity to share your faith in the Anabaptist tradition with people from around the world! Menno-Hof provides a completely furnished apartment, with all expenses paid plus a monthly stipend. Position available mid-September. Contact Joseph Yoder at Box 701, Shipshewana, IN 46565 or 260-768-4117 or email mennohof@tln.net for more information.

Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan., seeks candidates for a half-time position as ***associate pastor*** with primary responsibility for youth (junior high-college) as part of a multi-staff team. Position (three-year contract) open Aug. 15. Contact Merrill F. Raber, chair, Search Committee, 620 Rolling Hills Circle, Newton, KS 67114; 316-283-6444; mbraber@cox.net.

Mennonite Mission Network, the mission agency of Mennonite Church USA, with offices in Elkhart, Ind., Harrisonburg, Va., and Newton, Kan., is seeking a full-time candidate for ***news director and senior writer.*** Responsibilities include managing, writing and editing the news for Mennonite Mission Network, serving as the primary writer for international news-gathering trips and domestic news assignments. Qualifications include bachelor's degree in communication, journalism or a related field, five years of professional writing and photography experience in media, advertising, public relations or communications.

Please email a letter of interest and resumé to staffrecruitment@mennonitemission.net or by mail to Mennonite Mission Network Human Resources, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515. Application deadline is March 31.

TROUBLED ABOUT PAYING FOR WAR?

Learn about the campaign to pass a federal law that would allow the taxes from those conscientiously opposed to war to be used for non-military purposes only. Excellent resources are available, including a video, *Compelled by Conscience,* and a booklet, *Congress Shall Make No Law: Stories of Religious Freedom and Conscience in the United States.*

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The Passion: the good, the bad and the ugly

Gordon Houser

On Ash Wednesday, Feb. 25, Mel Gibson released his film *The Passion of the Christ* to theaters. More than 20,000 Christians had already screened earlier versions, however. It is the most talked-about film in some time. So let's talk.

The good: One of Gibson's stated aims in making this film was to bring the reality of Christ's suffering to audiences. He wanted to make something different from the "pretty" Jesus movies. That he does—for the most part.

He used his own money, which gave him artistic freedom. He has the characters speak Aramaic (the language Jesus used) and Latin (though the Romans there actually spoke Greek). As one with a college degree in linguistics, I liked this choice. It is one more element that helps us imagine being in first-century Palestine. (Rest assured, he uses subtitles.)

The location and costumes also help bring the reality of the story to us. It is good to be reminded that this really happened, in space and time.

I liked some of Gibson's artistic choices. The opening scene in the Garden of Gethsemane is spooky yet moving. The use of brief flashbacks through the film is effective, though it doesn't overcome other problems (more later). And he employs an androgynous Satan figure (played by a female actress). This is one of the extrabiblical elements I found interesting. Not as effective, however, are Satan's cohorts, a group of demonic children.

The bad: While Gibson mostly follows the Gospel of John for his story line (with some Matthew thrown in), the film is more medieval than biblical.

The single greatest drawback of the film is its obsession with the violence done to Jesus. The Gospels say simply, "They scourged him." That's not enough for Gibson. He follows a medieval tradition of focusing on the wounds of Christ and uses the writings of an 18th-century nun.

One of the rules of good fiction writing is that "less is more." Gibson eschews such advice. The scourging of Jesus goes on and on, a relentless display of gore. And there's more. The Jewish temple guards beat him and hang him over a bridge. All the way to Golgotha the Roman soldiers continue to whip him. It's hard to watch.

Depicting violence is tricky. It can be used effectively to make a point and move the story along. But here, although initially moving, it becomes the focus, and we feel like voyeurs at a slasher film. (Note: Do not take children to this movie.)

While much of the film follows what we know of biblical events, Gibson misses some things, such as, among others, making Mary Magdalene the woman caught in adultery and casting a white actor as Simon of Cyrene, an African.

The ugly: The controversy surrounding this film began last year when Jewish leaders saw an earlier cut and objected to its anti-Semitism. Gibson's conservative Catholicism and refusal to countenance changes led to much publicity. Then he screened the film exclusively to friendly audiences and got more publicity. His $25 million investment paid off. The film made $117.5 million the first five days.

The Gospels reflects an intra-Jewish conflict between those who followed Jesus and leaders who did not. Still, the film depicts Jesus and his followers as Jewish and shows Romans' hatred of Jews.

Yet Gibson seems to ignore today's context. Acts of violence against Jews are on the increase, and the history of anti-Semitism shows Christians as their worst persecutors. Easter was the time of year Jews feared most, when Christians heard the Passion story and went after "the Christ-killers."

Curiously the character with the most psychological depth in the film is Pontius Pilate. Gibson makes him sympathetic; he only agrees to crucify Jesus because the Jewish leaders make him. Yet history tells us he was a ruthless tyrant.

Many Christians will see this film and be moved toward a deeper faith in Jesus' sacrifice for us. But isn't it who Jesus is that saves us rather than only the bloody way he died?

The film ends with a brief, refreshingly understated scene of the resurrected Jesus.

BOOKS

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross: Scriptural Reflections for Lent by Patrick J. Ryan (Paulist Press, 2004, $14.95) includes reflections for each week of Lent, following the lectionary. A short introduction offers a helpful summary of the meaning of Lent and the history of its observance. He also has a chapter on the saints of Lent. While designed for Catholics, this is a useful devotional by a reputable biblical scholar.

FILMS

The Fog of War (PG-13), subtitled "Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara," just won the Oscar for best documentary. Director Errol Morris interviews the secretary of defense under Kennedy and Johnson and shows footage of World War II and the Vietnam War. This excellent film dissects the complexity and evil of war from the point of view of one who helped carry it out.

DISTURBING STATS

- The world's average temperature in 2003 was 58.03 degrees Fahrenheit, which tied it for the second hottest year on record. (Record-keeping began Jan. 1, 1880.) The hottest year was 1998, with an average temperature of 58.14. The five hottest years on record all have occurred since 1997, and the 10 hottest since 1990.—National Climatic Data Center
- According to a survey by the Center for Civil Society Studies at Johns Hopkins University, 64 percent of the 236 nonprofit organizations across the United States that responded reported more income in 2003, while 66 percent said they had higher costs for health and liability insurance as well as for wages, salaries and other expenses. More than half the respondents reported being in "severe" or "very severe" financial stress.—*New York Times*
- 4.5 million, or 6.3 percent, of all U.S. children are being raised by their grandparents.—AARP

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Everett J. Thomas

Lord *and* Savior

Mel Gibson's movie *The Passion of the Christ* has focused popular culture on the great divide in human history: Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. In our April 6 issue we plan to run excerpts from readers who saw the movie and want to describe their experience (see page 4).

No matter what debates the movie sparks among theater critics and in academic circles, it is astounding to have so many people in our country confronted with this, the greatest story, during the Lent and Easter seasons. The graphic depiction of Jesus' suffering and death—with Gibson himself driving the crude spikes through Jesus' hands into the cross—reminds a new generation of the sacrifice God made for the world he has created: offering his only begotten Son so that all who believe in him might be saved.

Many who saw this movie will now understand for the first time what the story of Jesus means. But what might be the long-term effect on those who respond with a decision to place their faith in Christ? Or how might our church respond to the many people who are finding salvation in that sacred story told through this powerful medium?

As we answer those questions, however, we are confronted by another one more basic: What does it mean to say we are saved by faith in Christ?

A debate around this question started several months ago on the pages of *The Mennonite* after we published J. Nelson Kraybill's article on substitutionary atonement ("Four Spiritual Truths of a Peacemaking God," Nov. 4, 2003). As I edited the letters from readers, it seemed to me that those who responded were mostly leaders and thinkers in our church who enjoy debating whether one salvation theory is more suitable to our Anabaptist tradition than another. I hope, however, that the movie will spark a different kind of debate now, one that engages more of us at a visceral level. The issue can be focused around the three words that describe who Jesus is: Lord, and, Savior.

Over years and decades of faithfulness, we become more like the Lord we serve. That is how Jesus saves us.

Many Mennonites find meaning and comfort in recalling that moment when Jesus became a personal Savior. I remember raising my hand during an invitation at summer camp. I renewed that initial commitment at 18—responding to an altar call during a Tom Skinner Crusade. I also remember my confusion on both occasions when "nothing happened." Reading testimonials in local newspaper now, I wonder whether some youth who decided to become a Christian after seeing *The Passion* will also become confused because "nothing happened" after deciding to accept Jesus as Savior.

On the other hand, many Mennonites respond to who Jesus is by focusing on Jesus as Lord. The great Anabaptist theme is "nachfolge Christi": to follow Jesus in life as well as in death. This stream calls us to do as Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus was a historic figure who left us a pattern of behavior to follow: Following that ethic is evidence that we are disciples of that Lord.

But Jesus is both Lord *and* Savior. It is when we choose one and reject the other that we miss the fullness of God's grace and truth.

In the book *Adventures in Missing the Point: How the Culture-Controlled Church Neutered the Gospel* (Zondervan, 2003), Brian McLaren, Donald Clarke and Tony Campolo criticize their fellow evangelicals for believing that once someone "gets saved" they have crossed the finish line and need to do little more while waiting to go to heaven. Instead, they insist that having one's sins forgiven is "the starting line, not the finish line, of salvation."

We need a similar critique of Anabaptist theology that denies—or has an anemic view—of Jesus as Savior. Otherwise, ours is an arid works righteousness that suggests we earn our way to heaven by simply following the Sermon on the Mount.

"Salvation means being rescued from fruitless ways of life here and now," say McLaren, Clarke and Campolo, "to share in God's saving love … in an adventure called the kingdom of God."

That is how Jesus saves us. It happens while we follow him. Over years and decades of faithfulness, we become more like the Lord we serve. We are slowly transformed by the Christ we follow. This is a miracle of grace and the great mystery of salvation. For those who would follow Christ in life and death, Jesus is both Lord and Savior.—*ejt*

The next issue of *The Mennonite* will be dated April 6, 2004.

The Mennonite

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April 6, 2004

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Truth is stronger than fiction

Early Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and I don't know where they have put him!"—John 20:1-2, NLT

Ron W. Adams is pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

I'm a Quest for the Historical Jesus dabbler. I'm no academic, but I try to keep up with the latest "shocking" findings of the Jesus Seminar. I've read some of its more mainstream members (Borg and Crossan). I've read Paula Fredriksen, Bart Ehrman and E.P. Sanders. I've even plowed through the first two volumes of N.T. Wright's magnum opus. And I've read *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown.

Brown's novel does not deserve to be mentioned in the same paragraph with the works of such eminent scholars. But I'm sure it's caused more theological and historical debate in U.S. church and culture than any scholarly book has or will.

The book has created such a stir by claiming that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married and had children. These children had children, and a "messianic" line continued down through the centuries. The plot of the novel centers around the conflict between those protecting the church against such a revelation and those bent on uncovering the "truth," no matter the cost. It's a fast, easy beach read.

Like the Left Behind series, *The Da Vinci Code* is treated by some as if it were a work of nonfiction. As a pastor, I am worried by that.

I'm grateful the book has awakened complacent people and made us want to know more about the life of Jesus, even if only for clues to support the premise of a mystery novel. Suddenly people are asking questions about Jesus, Mary Magdalene, the meaning of incarnation and the value of marriage and children. That's a development any pastor would welcome.

But I worry that bad history and bad theology can be so convincing if packaged well. I worry that our historical and exegetical tools have become so rusty that we can't separate the biblical wheat from the fictional tares. I worry that our understanding of Jesus as incarnate Lord will become as distorted by Brown's book as our understanding of eschatology has been distorted by the work of LaHaye and Jenkins. I worry whenever we base our theology and practice on works of fiction.

Maybe I need to lighten up. It's just a novel. People will forget it and move on. But move on to what?

When Mary went to the tomb, she found the stone rolled away. She ran to find the other disciples to help her interpret what she'd seen. Two returned with her and discovered the tomb empty and Jesus gone. After they'd left, Mary lingered in the garden, still unsure about the meaning of the empty tomb. Then Jesus came and told her the truth.

I'm not wanting to discourage the reading of books like *The Da Vinci Code*. If they make us explore our faith and history, all the better.

But in the end, like Mary, we must go to the place where we last saw Jesus. We must go to the other disciples, tell them what we've seen and ask them to help us understand. We must go back to the Gospels and find the meaning of incarnation, death and resurrection. We must remain with the gospel long enough for Jesus to tell us the truth.

Read *The Da Vinci Code* and be entertained. Have your curiosity piqued. Then read the Gospels and be challenged. Have your faith sustained. Read in the company of your sisters and brothers. Read and wait for the Spirit of Jesus to come and reveal the truth. Because in this case, truth is much stronger than fiction.

TheMennonite

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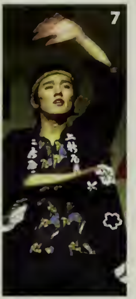

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Bottom-line questions

In the March 2 editorial ("Bottom-Line Questions"), Everett J. Thomas says of Mennonite Church USA agencies, "Unfortunately, not enough of our money made it into their programs last year." Thomas then listed two questions that are important to our constituency: Has the agency received a favorable opinion about its finances in an audit from a reputable accounting firm? Did the agency end the fiscal year with greater or fewer assets?

I suggest a third question that carries more weight than the other two: Do I trust the agencies to use the dollars that I will give in ways that will represent my values and commitments?

People will give sacrificially to support work for which they have a passion, but they will give reluctantly or not at all if they are concerned that the agency will not represent their values and commitments. The majority of people in the part of the church where I am involved are conservative, evangelical Anabaptists. In 20 years of ministry I have seen the level of trust gradually decline in the agencies' abilities to represent these values. I also believe the transformation process multiplied this problem of distrust. Trust will need to be restored before we see a turnaround in giving.—*Carl Geissinger, McClure, Pa.*

I appreciated the editorial "Bottom-Line Questions" but would encourage *The Mennonite* to take it a step further. Although the focus was on Mennonite Church USA, conferences, mission boards and their constituencies are facing similar dilemmas. What I find most disturbing is that questions about audits and loss of assets are only posed in light of deficits, cutbacks and crises. Even if agencies end with greater assets, we should not be lulled into thinking that they have automatically been good stewards.

Financial difficulties can be a symptom of greater problems such as deficits in strategic planning, leadership and board member selection. The buzz may be about transformation, but are the methods being employed in planning and directing equally transforming? Or are our church agencies traveling down their same historical roads? Without cynicism, we need to explore tough questions with those in leadership and the boards to whom they report. I think we need to better understand who and what are shaping the vision, not simply look at the balance in the checkbook.—*Charles Howard, Mbale, Uganda*

"Bottom-Line Questions" prompts me to ask a few of my own. First, I would like to know what percentage of the total Mennonite Church USA budget is spent for overhead, including all organizations that receive funding. In other words, how many administrators and staff people are employed to keep all the offices and programs going?

Along with that, how many workers, other than administrators and staff, are there? I am interested in the ratio between the number of administrators/staff and the number of workers. I'm interested in this because Mennonite Mission Network particularly seems top heavy. (I've not looked at the other agencies.) The handbook "Mission Mosaic" lists 104 staff people. I was not able to determine how many workers there are in the field, but does it take that many people to support the workers? —*Verney Unruh, North Newton, Kan.*

In "Bottom-Line Questions" Thomas says, "It is our responsibility to hold denominational agencies financially accountable." How is this to be done in the newly formed Mennonite Church USA?

Congregations and conferences select and send delegates to the Delegate Assembly. But at Atlanta 2003 there was no accounting of income and expenditures in the report book or in the delegate sessions. How is a delegate to hold agencies of the denomination accountable when these agencies set their own budgets and give no detailed reporting at delegate sessions?

Unless accountability is more clearly defined, the only resort delegates have is through their giving—not a very sound way to invite people to join in the transformation process. Should the Executive Board, which is the only agency with responsibility for the whole, be given some role in the budget review for the whole church?—*Marvin Zehr, Newton, Kan.*

"Bottom-Line Questions" quotes Executive Board staff member Ted Stuckey as saying that part of the funding problem is that "the system is not able to determine how contributions should be divided when someone gives a 'firstfruits offering.'" This

IN THIS ISSUE

Good news about Mennonite Church USA dominates reports in this issue. Churchwide boards ended their fiscal years on Jan. 31 with more contributions than expected (page 20). The Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference bishop board is leading its conference toward full membership in Mennonite Church USA (page 22). Mennonite Central Committee workers continue relief work in strife-torn Haiti (page 23). But the best good news is the Easter story. Elaine Maust (page 9) looks with new eyes at the days following Jesus' resurrection and says, "Jesus' choices during those 40 days between the tomb and heaven provide the same surprises as his actions between Bethlehem and the cross."—*Editor* statement seems to understand the firstfruits system used by Mennonite Church USA to be one of percentage giving from congregations to conference and from conference to denomination. In Central District Conference this is certainly not the case. Of our 57 congregations, only one gives to CDC in this percentage manner; the other 56 use the CDC office as a flow-through reservoir. That means that CDC passes along to MC USA exactly what each congregation tells us they wish to give to MC USA. It is the congregations of CDC who determine what will be given to MC USA, not the conference. For the one congregation that does use percentage giving, we have a formula of percentages for what CDC sends on to denominational boards and agencies.—*John Hockman, CDC treasurer, Topeka, Ind.*

Apology not enough
Re "Leaders Offer Apology to MPH Retirees" (March 2): I commend the Joint Executive Committee (JEC) of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada for their apology to the Mennonite Publishing House retirees for the injustice done to them when the supplemental health benefits promised them were terminated. But I'm wondering if that's as far as the JEC needs to go. Is the JEC taking enough responsibility by merely suggesting that interested members from across the church send donations? Should the JEC make a commitment to MPH retirees as to what they can expect to receive and develop some kind of structure to adequately fund this cause? I am willing to donate, but before I do I'd like to know that the JEC is taking a further step and will carry additional responsibility to see that this obligation is met. —*Ivan Kauffmann, Goshen, Ind.*

Re the Mennonite Publishing House employees whose supplemental health insurance benefits were terminated: For a church denomination that takes great pains to hold forth peace and justice, this apology is hollow. The Bible says, Don't bear false witness and don't steal. When Zacchaeus confessed the need and willingness to make restitution, Jesus said, "Salvation has come to this house." I believe in full restoration of those broken promises and benefits.

I am a member of the denomination—the former Mennonite Church—that broke those promises. We seem to have money for lavish church buildings, nice cars, mission projects, mutual aid, for the building and maintenance of halls of learning, expensive homes and much more. Jesus told the Pharisees that they tithed small stuff and neglected the weightier and more important issues.—*Dean Hochstetler, Nappanee, Ind.*

Recognize centuries of persecution
The article "Reformed Church Offers Reconciliation" (March 2) offers hope. However, for the reconciliation event to have integrity there will need to be a recognition that persecution of Anabaptists went centuries beyond 1600. While all Anabaptists were expelled from Canton Zurich, in Canton Bern the persecution lasted well into the 19th century. People were being rounded up and expelled up to 1710. Others continued to leave due to the hostile environment. As late as 1811, 26 children from 10 Anabaptist families were rounded up in the parish of Langnau, taken to the church and baptized. In 1823 a complete register of all Anabaptists was made. They had to announce the time and place of their meetings to the district official. In 1874, every male Swiss citizen was required to do military service. Today, conscientious objectors to military service have to serve 50 percent longer in some civilian service.

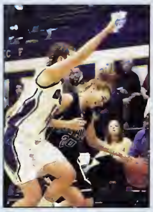
The Swiss Mennonite Church has been in dialogue with the Reformed Church on a number of occasions, and they feel their concerns need to be addressed so that there can be a true spirit of reconciliation. We need to join them and give support in their dialogue.—*David L. Habegger, Newton, Kan.*

Objecting to this war
Thank you, Robert Kreider, for speaking out against the war on terrorism ("I am a Conscientious Objector to This War," March 2). I want to say loud and clear that I too am a conscientious objector to this war. I want to constantly recognize that evil lurks right around the corner but not be overcome with fear. I refuse to be sucked into this war, and I want to work harder at the "alternative service" at hand—to look into the eyes of everyone I meet and trust, love, forgive, be hospitable and be a real friend. I hope to hear from pulpits, from printed pages and from email messages a call loud and clear, "Do not be afraid, fear no evil, I am with you."—*Margaret Metzler, Goshen, Ind.*

While I agree with the context of Kreider's Speaking Out, I am struck by the title. When one says "this war," does it not become a political position as opposed to saying "to war," which is a theological position. Our objection should not be dependent on the political actions of the day. When our statements focus on the political actions of the government, then our positions can appear political. When our statements are not reactions to the politics of the day, they carry a theological content that transcends presidents and nations. This allows us to be activists instead of reactivists.—*Robert Martz, Elkhart, Ind.*

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. —*Editors*

IN BRIEF


Patricia A. Larson

Not so sweet

Eastern Mennonite University's Stephanie Mathews dribbles under pressure during a March 12 Division III NCAA tournament game against Hardin-Simmons University. EMU lost 91-64 in the sectional semifinals (the sweet 16).

Travel plans

The *Mennonite Your Way Directory* has issued an eight-page update with more than 100 new host listings and changes for its 2003-2005 edition. To order a copy or update, email myw@mywdirectory.com, call 847-949-6179 or write MYW, 80 W. Sylvan Drive, Mundelein, IL 60060-3315. The directory now offers more than 1,500 host families in 41 countries.

Amish terrorists?

An Amish man who visited his ailing father in Canada was not allowed to return because of border security aimed at stopping terrorists. The man, adhering to the Bible's prohibition of graven images, had no photo identification. U.S. officials told the man photo waivers once granted the Amish have been cut off due to security concerns.—*Wichita Eagle* (March 6)

Mennonite Church Canada gets good news

WINNIPEG—Mennonite Church Canada is returning $125,000 to reserves that were seriously drawn down last year (all figures unaudited).

Two primary reasons for the positive income, says general secretary Dan Nighswander, are that "congregations and individuals gave almost $4 million, or 99.8 percent, of the donation budget" and that "income from investments and other nondonor sources was also higher than expected."

The income results are only part of the story. Conservative spending in operations resulted in expenses totaling $171,266 less than was budgeted. The bottom line, after planned reserve transfers and one-time costs, is a $125,000 surplus. The surplus will be used to replenish reserves that were drawn down last year.—*Mennonite Church Canada News Service*

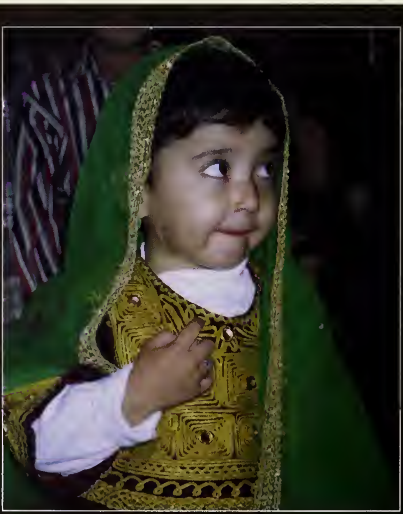
One year later in suffering Iraq

WINNIPEG—One year after the bombing started in Baghdad on March 20, 2003, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) continues its efforts to alleviate suffering in Iraq.

Postwar institutional support provided by MCC through partners include the following:

- $30,000 for new lab equipment and supplies to institutions such as the Mansour Pediatric Hospital in Baghdad;
- $45,000 to supply 5,000 people with food in 31 Baghdad hospitals;
- $75,000 for a two-month supply of tuberculosis medication;
- $86,000 for school rehabilitation;
- four containers of canned turkey.

Another key element of MCC's postwar response has been the financial support of de-mining efforts in southern Iraq. MCC has also supported and facilitated the All-Our-Children initiative, a consortium of agencies raising funds focussing on the health needs of Iraqi children and youth. —*Mennonite Central Committee Canada*


Dick Landis

Happy to be in school

A kindergarten girl in Afghanistan enjoys the chance to go to a school, funded by gifts from Friends of the Uzbeks, a partnership of nine Lancaster County, Pa., congregations, which worked with Eastern Mennonite Missions to raise $64,000 for work in Central Asia.

MMA will not go soft on mutual funds

GOSHEN, Ind.—MMA is voluntarily eliminating the use of controversial "soft dollars" in its MMA Praxis Mutual Funds and other stock investments.

Soft dollar use is legal but is being more closely examined by the mutual fund industry in the wake of the ethics scandals plaguing the mutual fund world. Soft dollars are a portion of commissions paid by mutual funds to brokers in exchange for items needed for investment research. The industry is now considering if lumping these indirect research costs into commission expenses is clear enough to mutual fund shareholders.

"Soft dollars are legal and accepted, but it does not feel right any longer to ask shareholders to pay these costs as commission expenses," says John L. Liechty, MMA senior vice president of financial services and president of MMA Praxis Mutual Funds. He notes that MMA has always stayed within "safe harbor" parameters created by the Securities and Exchange Commission in 1986. These parameters cover what soft dollars can be used for. MMA's "conscience is clear" on how it used soft dollars in the past, he says, but the time has come to take a more conservative stand.—*MMA*

Voluntary service continues in Canada

HAMILTON, Ont.—Five representatives from Mennonite Voluntary Service units in Winnipeg, Hamilton, Toronto and Montreal met Feb. 13-14 to make plans for continuing service programs in Canada. Last November the Mennonite Church Canada General Board decided to end financial support for MVS and Service Adventure programs.

The group proposed forming Mennonite Voluntary Service Adventure (MVSA), made up of a steering committee, management board and unit committees. In March the General Board affirmed the proposal and appointed Jeanette Unger of Waterloo, Ont., to the steering committee.

MVSA will now recruit volunteers and seek financial support. For more information visit www.mvsa.net.—*Carolyn Minor in* Canadian Mennonite, *with reports from Bill Bryson*

Paper examines Mennonites and Nazis

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—James P. Regier of Newton, Kan., a graduate of Bethel College, North Newton, won first prize in the annual Anabaptist Research Paper Competition for Undergraduates, sponsored by the Sider Institute for Anabaptist, Pietist and Wesleyan Studies at Messiah College, Grantham, Pa.

Regier's winning paper, "*Mennonitische Vergangenheitsbewaltigung*: Prussian Mennonites, the Third Reich and Coming to Terms with a Difficult Past," examines why most German Mennonites came to embrace German nationalism and to support Adolf Hitler's government. The paper analyzes how the group explained such support to themselves and others after the war.

Mennonite Mission Network expands work

ELKHART, Ind.—Ministries through Mennonite Mission Network expanded during its 2003-2004 fiscal year, despite a slight decline in contributions to the operational budget.

The expanded ministries occurred despite a 2-percent decline from the previous year in contributions to the operating budget.

Overall gifts to Mennonite Mission Network, however, were up 7 percent from the previous year because of estate gifts and bequests.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Pray for Peace
Act for Peace

One more congregation for peace

Members of Lee Heights Community Church of Cleveland, winner of the fourth annual Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office Congregational Advocacy Award, participate in a peace rally in Washington. In the past year, members of the church have held peace marches, prayer vigils and rallies to respond to violence in their neighborhood as well as standing against the death penalty and the war in Iraq.

Larry Bartel

Shall we dance?

Seven Japanese students at Hesston (Kan.) College perform a harvest festival dance March 4 at the 12th annual International Festival. The 48 international students at the college, assisted by food service staff, hosted an international meal and program. Of the 14 countries represented by the international students, the highest number, 13, come from Japan.

IN BRIEF

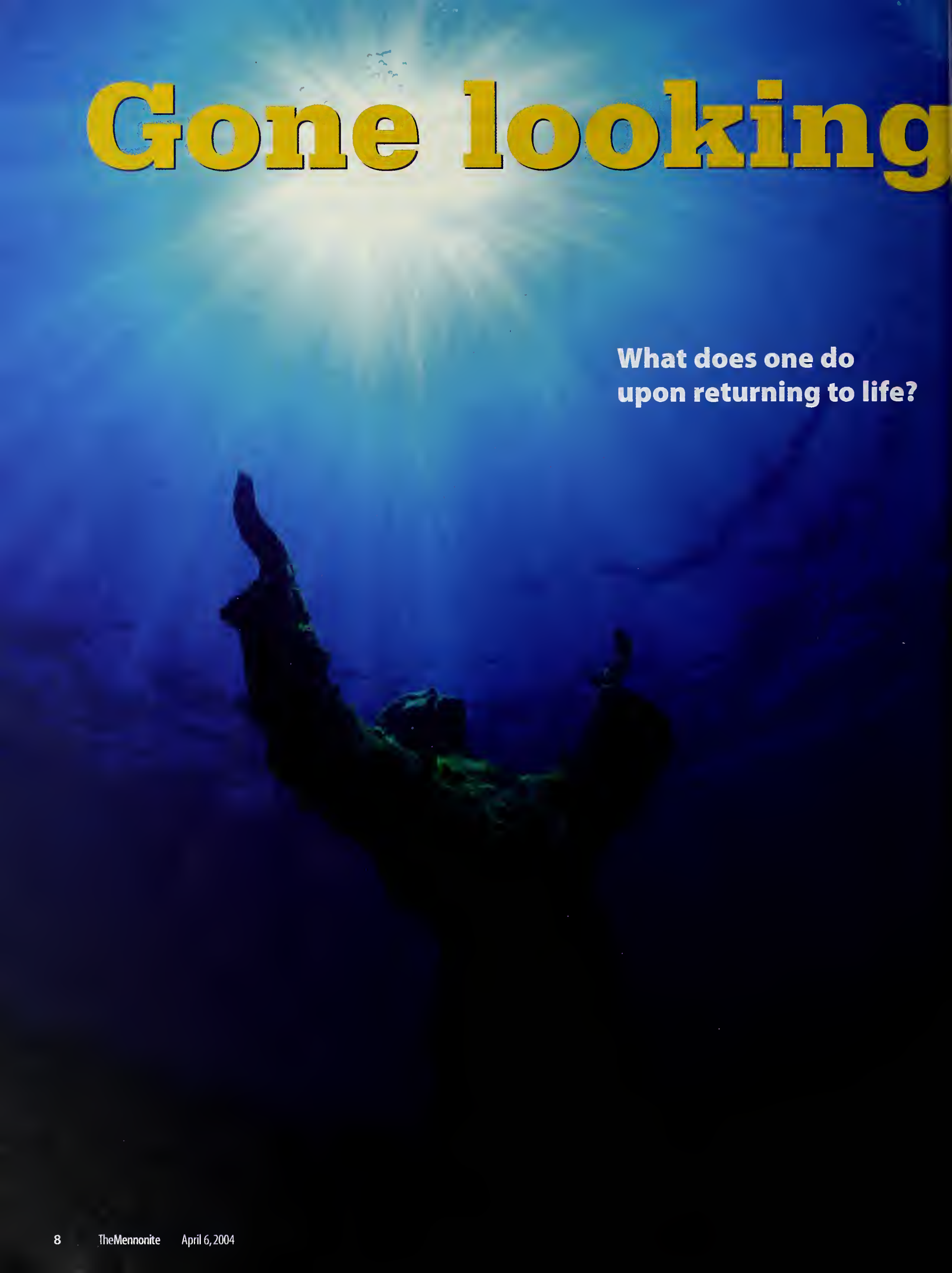
MWC looks ahead

Mennonite World Conference finances at the end of 2003 showed a positive Assembly Fund balance of $47,000, which will help finance future assemblies, including a feasibility study on the location of Assembly 15 in 2009. Invitations have come from MWC-member churches in Paraguay and eastern Pennsylvania. —*MWC News Service*

Rhoda Keener

Esther and 'Mama Benja' connect

It took just a few emails from her Tanzanian pen pal living with HIV/AIDS before Esther Fordham (above), a Goshen (Ind.) College sophomore, knew she had a lot to learn. Her pen pal, Mary, or "Mama Benja," a 38-year-old widow from the Tanzanian village of Mugumu, is dying of AIDS; her four children under the age of 12 will be left as orphans when she's gone. This was one of many pen-pal relationships from the Sister-Link project Fordham and 15 other students developed in a class last fall. Mennonite Women USA sponsors Sister-Link projects to help women in Mennonite Church USA connect locally and with the worldwide Anabaptist family.—*Mennonite Church USA News Service*



Gone looking

What does one do upon returning to life?

for his friends

by Elaine Maust

For Jesus there was no appearance in the synagogue, just to make a point. There was no repeat performance of the parade into Jerusalem to entertain the crowds. There was no audience with the Sanhedrin or with Pilate. It must have been tempting. No book deal. No made-for-TV movie. No Barbara Walters interview. Jesus' choices during those 40 days between the tomb and heaven provide the same surprises as his actions between Bethlehem and the cross.

What did Jesus do in those days after the stone rolled away?

For the rag-tag tribe that followed him, things were not looking good. The women were mad with grief and stories of angels (Luke 24:22-23). Judas committed suicide. The eleven were in self-imposed lockdown, mourning and weeping (Mark 16:10). Mary Magdalene decided to keep a graveside vigil.

For the rag-tag tribe that followed him, things were not looking good. The women were mad with grief and stories of angels (Luke 24:22-23). Judas committed suicide. The eleven were in self-imposed lockdown, mourning and weeping (Mark 16:10).

Early on Sunday morning, before it was light really, Mary went down to the garden tomb (John 20:1-18). What did she hope for in those dark, quiet

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

moments? What she discovered was that the grave had been opened. When she saw that, she bolted, reporting to Peter and John that grave robbers had stolen Jesus' body. While they looked into it, she stood outside the open tomb crying.

Maybe they were just a group of insecure friends, but Jesus hunted them down for a blessing and the assignment.

Mary bent over in the garden that morning, crying so hard she couldn't see straight, talking to angels and trying to make sense of the unexplainable. "Woman, why are you crying?" they asked. "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him."

She must have been in shock from what she saw just days earlier. She watched them torture and kill her hero. She had no reserves for this fresh disaster. What had they done with him? It only added to her grief that he was not there to help her know what to do. She sobbed. Was she losing her mind?

Then she noticed someone standing beside her. Turning, she saw a man she did not recognize. For the second time that morning she heard, "Why are you crying?"

Why did people keep asking her this? And why not cry? Why not scream? Why not cry until the day she dies? This must be the gardener. Her friends would not have asked.

"Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go get him." Did she think she could haul his body back herself?

"Mary." It was as unmistakable as a mother calling her child‘s name in a crowd. "Mary".

She turned and gasped. It was the teacher.

Of all the people Jesus might have kept that first appointment with on Easter Sunday, it was Mary. It was much-forgiven, much-grieving, much-loving Mary Magdalene Jesus sought out first. He tracked her down in the garden that morning to comfort her, "Why are you crying?" He came to help her with her grief, "Do not hold on to me." And he gave her a charge, "Go … to my brothers and tell them. …" The risen Christ hunting down a woman who stood outside at sunrise, crying.

That evening, Jesus stopped by to speak to the disciples (John 20:19-22). Terrified, they had locked themselves together in the room. If the crowds could slaughter Jesus, imagine what they might do to them.

Then he was standing there. "Peace be with you," he said. And just in case they were not sure, he showed them the marks on his hands. And he pulled open his tunic so that they could see his side, too. It was Jesus all right. The Bible says they were overjoyed.

I imagine them laughing and slapping each other on the back. I imagine them bragging about how they knew the women were right all along. Of course, not a doubt in their minds. In fact, they had fully expected Jesus to just appear in that locked room.

"Peace by with you!" Then Jesus added a simple commission, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." Sending you. Then he gave them a breath of the Spirit for the job before them.

Maybe they were just a group of insecure friends, but Jesus hunted them down for a blessing and the assignment.

There were others to whom Jesus paid visits during those days, Thomas, for example (John 20:24-31). Jesus seemed to prefer one honest doubter to a congregation of overconfident, insincere religious folks. He took time to resolve Thomas' questions and to challenge him, "Stop doubting and believe."

And then there is the wonderful story of Jesus down by the lake. According to John 21, seven of Jesus friends, disciples, decided to go fishing. But all night long they did not catch a single mackerel. Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore calling them.

I like to imagine that preparations for that day had begun early that morning. I imagine Jesus stopped by the market on his way to the lake and picked up some fish. I wonder if they were already cleaned or if he did it himself. Then he bought some bread from the bakery. And carrying his groceries, he headed for the sea.

Once he arrived on the beach, he looked across the water and smiled. There they were, dear chaps, fishing their hearts out. They were fishing out their grief, confusion and disillusionment. Jesus must have shook his head and picked up wood for the campfire. And there on the sand, like a mother who gets up early to make grits and biscuits for the children she loves, Jesus cooked breakfast for his friends.

You know the rest of the story. You know about the "net on the right side of the boat" and the miraculous catch of fish. God's extravagance. There were 153 large fish, to be exact. I love the specificity of the Bible. John and Peter recognized the mystery man on the shore. Peter dressed hurriedly. (Don't people typically take clothes off before jumping into the water?) Dressed in his "outer garment," Peter splashed toward the Lord.

The other disciples followed in the boat. "When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread" (verse 9). A grilled fish sandwich breakfast on the beach. Jesus invited them to "Come and have breakfast" (verse 12).

Can you imagine that tenderness? Would the Lord of the universe serve breakfast? That is precisely what he did. And immediately after that, he took Peter aside and told him to feed and take care of his sheep and lambs.

It is tough to understand why Jesus, the Son of God, would die and come back to life. But it is almost as amazing that he spent the first days of his new life looking up his friends to comfort, confront and commission them. He came back, not to say goodbye but to say go. Perhaps it should not surprise us that one who had the great kindness to make the ultimate sacrifice also had the tenderness to return, making sure his friends understood.

Perhaps it should not surprise us that one who had the great kindness to make the ultimate sacrifice also had the tenderness to return, making sure his friends understood.

Always the searcher, Jesus spent the 40 days after the resurrection looking up a few friends. After all, he was the one who "came to seek out and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). He came for the lost, like his own friends, who were lost in grief and confusion that first Easter season.

In celebration of this Easter, we will sing hymns, watch some TV and help discover lost eggs. We will attend sunrise services, dress the kids in something festive and call the relatives. We will bake a ham, laugh with family and take naps. We will do all the things we always do at Easter.

But this Easter, maybe for the first time, we will spend some time doing what Jesus did. We will join the Lord in acts of companionship, comfort and hospitality. We will join the search.

We will step out our front doors with a plate of the Easter feast in our hands for the folks in the next apartment. We will drive across town to look up a coworker. We will hunt down the neighbors' kids. Like Jesus did, we will spend our time seeking out our friends.

And when we find them, we will comfort them, offer them peace and invite them to believe. We will hunt them down to tell them the Good News; Jesus is alive. Then we will tell them more good news, that Jesus has been out since early that morning, looking for them.

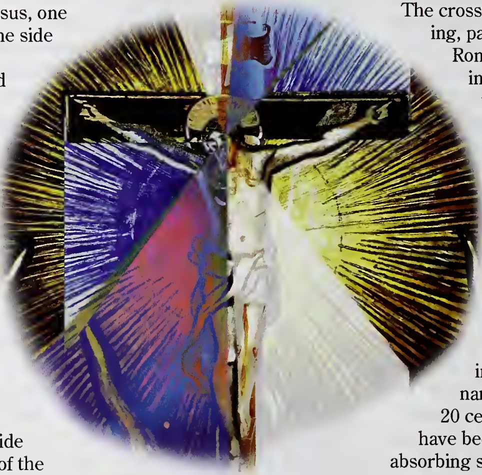
Elaine Maust is co-pastor of Jubilee Mennonite Church, Meridian, Miss.

A Good Friday meditation

Two sides of the cross

by James Klassen

One cross stood on the right side of the cross of Jesus, one on the left. On one side of Jesus the man ridiculed him and rejected him. The man on the other side acknowledged that Jesus was innocent and accepted him as the Son of God. On which side are you?



The arms of Jesus were stretched out on the horizontal beam of the cross, symbolizing his reaching out to all humanity. The problem is not with Jesus. The problem is with humanity, which divides itself into two groups. The cross divides humanity. The cross divides history.

But the cross also had a top side and a bottom side. The top side of the vertical beam pointed to God. The bottom side was rooted in the earth. The cross was a bridge between God and the world.

In his book *On the Meaning of Life: An Anthology of Theological Reflection* (Evangel Press, 1993), Clarence Bauman writes: "In Christ we never experience the reality of the world apart from God (as do the secularists) nor do we experience the reality of God apart from the world (as claim some mystics)." Two sides of the cross—two sides of life—forever linked.

The cross also had a front side and a back side. The back side of the cross is where the shadow of death is dark and heavy. The front side of the cross is where the light from God's face shines. Jesus died on the cross, then God raised him from the dead. Christians live in the shadow of the cross and in the light of the resurrection.

Two sides of the cross, four sides, six sides—and still there is another dimension. I would call it the outside of the cross that the whole world can see: the huge spikes driven into Jesus' hands and feet, the excruciating pain, the terrible inhumanity. Inflicting pain on enemies is not new.

When you have truly experienced the love of God, you want to share it with the whole world, regardless of what it may cost you.

The cross was designed to bring a lingering, painful death to the enemies of the Roman Empire—and it worked: The incredible pain even drove some to insanity before death came.

But if we look closely, we can see another side of the cross. I would call it the inside of the cross. If we listen carefully we can hear Jesus, the man on the cross, praying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). This side reflects the undying love of God. And starting with a follower of Jesus named Stephen (Acts 7:57-60), for 20 centuries faithful followers of Jesus have been praying that same prayer—absorbing suffering rather than inflicting it.

When you have truly experienced the love of God, you want to share it with the whole world, regardless of what it may cost you. We are called to be the presence of Jesus in the world. Jesus said, "Take up your cross and follow me." Peter wrote, "If you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps" (1 Peter 2:20-21, NIV). We are called to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

Perhaps the cross is a mirror. It reflects rejection. It reflects hate and violence. It reflects the faces of soldiers pounding nails. It reflects acceptance. It reflects love and forgiveness. It reflects the face of God. Look into the mirror. Whose face do you see? On which side of the cross are you? TM

James Klassen is assistant pastor of Richardson (Texas) Vietnamese Baptist Church and an associate member of Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kan.

Slipping through the cracks

by Kathryn Kingsbury

Without my glasses, I take
the sprawling thing for a weed—
chicory maybe, which would be virtueless

if it weren't for the rare and aching blueness
of its blooms. But I see no blue,
just a chaos of tendrils the color of muck.
I put my glasses on.

It's an aspen, just barely, growing in the seam
between road and curb.
Its trunk, thin as a thumb,
plies the paving open
patiently.

This bothers me.
You see, I know something about trees,
and part of what I know is that they do not grow
from seed to knee height
overnight. How often have I driven past
and never seen what I see now?:

the grace with which it concedes space
to each car rushing by.

Tomorrow on my way
to work, its leaves will wave to me,
bouncing light off my bumper in the steep
sun of early morning.

Or maybe they're a gaggle of birds—
startled by swift movement,
shuddering their shoulders
in preparation for flight.

Kathryn Kingsbury lives in Madison, Wis.

Choosing the Passion

A reflection on the film 'The Passion of the Christ'

by John Troyer

I viewed a prerelease screening of *The Passion of the Christ* about a month before its release on Feb. 25. I was wary, wondering if I was going to get sucked into a giant publicity machine.

While I might have portrayed several details differently, director Mel Gibson did an excellent job in presenting the last 12 hours of the life of Jesus. At times it was overwhelming in its detail of the brutality, at other points touching in beautiful ways. Everyone who watches it will be left with one question: Why did Jesus have to die in this way?

> This movie will raise questions among those who do not believe and will be a wake-up call to those of us who say we believe.

The film doesn't answer that question; it is left to us, the church. How will we answer? The popular answer is that it was for God's "satisfaction" in paying the penalty he demanded be paid for sin. This is not adequate. It short-circuits the redemptive power of watching a film such as this. Christian comedian Chonda Pierce wrote: **"After watching what Christ went through for me—I was ready to knock someone in the head! Mainly me."**

This reminds me of our experience with foster care, telling our children some of the stories from *Martyrs' Mirror*. Not long afterward, I saw one of them outside beating the ground with a stick. I asked him what he was doing and he said, "I'm beating up the people that did that to those Christians." I understand and share the concern of some in the Jewish community that this movie may incite violence. There is a high level of violence in the movie that provokes a response. If forgiveness of self and others is not the response, it is not a long stretch to go from knocking yourself in the head to knocking someone else in the head. This is not the fault of the movie, which I did not find anti-Semitic. It is rather the scandal of the Gospels.

This violent response to Jesus' death has some relationship to the satisfaction theory of atonement. In his book *Cross Purposes: The Violent Grammar of the Christian Atonement*, Anthony Bartlett ties in the articulation of the satisfaction theory with the rise of the Crusades of medieval times. Throughout history the church has looked for wiggle room to justify the use of force and violence against others. At the heart of this rationale is the satisfaction theory. It localizes the suffering of Christ as a specific act that exempts his followers from suffering.

We have not articulated an understanding of the work of the cross that provides a better response. How do we understand the phrases that identify us as having been "bought with the blood" and "justified by his blood." How does the "blood of Christ … cleanse our consciences"? **What will we say to our neighbor who expects us to answer the question, Why did Jesus have to die?**

Robin Collins poses an insightful twist on the story of the Prodigal Son. He imagines the prodigal coming home and repenting, as in the original story. But the father moves away from his embrace with these words, "I cannot simply forgive you for what you have done, not even so much as to make you one of my hired men. You have insulted my honor by your wild living. Simply to forgive you would be to trivialize sin; it would be against the moral order of the entire universe. For nothing is less tolerable in the order of things than for a son to take away the honor due his father and not make recompense for what he takes away. Such is the severity of my justice that reconciliation will not be made unless the penalty is utterly paid. My wrath—my avenging justice—must be placated."

Collins writes: "Then the elder brother spoke up. 'Father, I will pay the debt that he owes and endure your just punishment for him. Let me work extra in the field on his behalf and thereby placate your wrath.' And it came to pass that the elder brother took on the garb of a servant and labored hard year after year, often long into the night, on behalf of his younger brother. **And finally, when the elder brother died of exhaustion, the father's wrath was placated against his younger son and they lived happily for the remainder of their days"** (http://home.messiah.edu/~rcollins/Atone.htm).

This is the story of the satisfaction theory. In reality the father chose to forgive, at great personal cost to his honor, wealth and relationship with his other son. He did not place conditions or stipulations on his forgiveness. In other teachings, Jesus calls his followers also be people of forgiveness.

What does this have to do with the movie? Everything. We need to see Jesus, his call to his way of life and his very self as a revelation of the

Father. We have an opportunity to embrace it. **We have an opportunity to have our consciences cleansed by his blood. Or we can distance ourselves.** We can embrace medieval theories of honor and ascribe them to God. We can escape and leave ourselves untouched, unwilling to make any kind of sacrifice ourselves because our theory gives us an exit strategy.

The Passion of the Christ raises the stakes as we tell others about Jesus. We have ignored implications of the atonement for too long. This movie will raise questions among those who do not believe and will be a wake-up call to those of us who say we believe. So here I am, recommending that you see the movie and help others understand this wonderful, redemptive, beautiful message: that God in heaven, full of power, chose to suffer with us and empower us to suffer with him. That his suffering without retaliation transforms and redeems the world. That we can embrace this life without fear because the power of death is broken through his resurrection. This is truly a story worth seeing, telling and choosing to embrace.

Why did Jesus have to die? To fully show us the forgiveness and grace of God. Tell your friends.

John Troyer is pastor of Locust Grove Mennonite Church, Burr Oak, Mich.

Other responses to 'The Passion of the Christ'

Gibson has made a movie that is historically realistic and biblically backward. The major choices he has made regarding the focus of the movie and the scenes to highlight are the opposite of the choices made by the writers of the Gospels. The biblical writers wrote carefully to emphasize the parts of the Jesus story that are most important. Gibson has taken their story and emphasized all the things they thought were unimportant. He has made an anti-gospel.—*Wes Bergen, North Newton, Kan.*

I give Gibson an A for being passionate about Christ's passion. Gibson is justified in giving us this view of Christ's journey from the Garden's bloody sweat to Good Friday's bloody death. Our society goes to war at the drop of a hat. It makes millions of dollars in profit on violent movies. And it denies that rape, child abuse and spouse battering happen daily all around us. But let someone make a movie about God's Son—who underwent violent suffering so that we could know peace and love in our hearts and in our world—and we get rattled. Precisely. That is Gibson's point.—*Laurie L. Oswald, Newton, Kan.*

Jesus' salvation of humanity through crucifixion (which is the whole point of the movie) is insufficiently explained. Jesus' death somehow rescues us from the devil and "makes all things new." But how? The movie assumes an audience already knowledgeable (and supportive) of the substitutionary atonement theory. Other New Testament understandings of the cross are ignored.—*Ryan Ahlgrim, Indianapolis*

The movie focuses only on the last 12 hours of the life of Jesus. The waning moments of Jesus' life are often called "the passion." It is too bad more of Jesus' life is not included, and I find that focus telling in its theological bias. We Anabaptists "passionately" include the life, message, passion and resurrection in our theology. We hold dear all aspects of Christ. ... I'm in no hurry to go see it, even though I'm told that it is provocative. For me, Jesus lived, died and was resurrected 2,000 years ago, and by the grace of God the whole story changed my life and is much alive today. Mel Gibson's version can wait.—*Gordon Allaby, Moundridge, Kan.*

I saw the Passion Play in 2000 and now this movie, and each was a profound personal experience for me in the reality that Jesus came into the world for the sole purpose of dying on the cross for my sins, and because he lives today and sent the Comforter to be with me, I have hope. Both times I had tears streaming down my cheeks, but not without hope. The movie is much more graphic, but the flashbacks tell the gospel.—*Elizabeth Bauman Shelly, Bluffton, Ohio*

Many of the pogroms across Europe were created by the Passion plays that kept coming up at Easter time. The few weeks following Easter were a great time for Christians to rob and pack up the Jews in their area and send them on down the road. There is that same connection in the history of the Holocaust in our day. ... We need to be ready to counter the right wing of our theological brothers and sisters who continue to blame Jews for the death of Jesus.—*Jim Compton-Schmidt, Fresno, Calif.*

I come away from the movie soberly weighing Jesus' word that anyone who would be his disciple must take up his or her cross and follow. One cannot be cavalier about the meaning of this call or reduce it simply to psychological stress. These words would have had graphic meaning to the early Christian community. The movie prods us toward the same.—*David B. Miller, State College, Pa.*

Too often we find it difficult to know how to initiate discussion of our faith with those around us. This film offers a missional opportunity to listen respectfully to what others have to say about the main character and speak honestly about how we experience Jesus and the way he opened for those who follow him.—*Ruth Naylor, Bluffton, Ohio*

I came away from the film with many thoughts and feelings, but the profoundest was this: As Jesus said, "This is my body, broken for you," I realized I would never receive Communion the same way again.—*Carie Good, Taftsville, Vt.*

As a tool for evangelism, I have my doubts. Walking through the lobby with tear-dimmed eyes, we were snapped back to reality when a woman said to her lady companion, "Let's go for a beer." I suspect this was all too typical of many viewers, where the mundane remains near the surface of our psyches.—*Denton Croyle, Wadsworth, Ohio*

The Lord's Supper will never be the same when the bread is broken and the pastor reminds the communicants, "This is his body broken for you."—*Elam S. Kurtz, West Jefferson, N.C.*

Jesus, Savior and Lord, What we cost you!—*Paul and Frieda Barkman, Twentynine Palms, Calif.*

Can a violent movie preach the gospel of peace? The suffering of Jesus portrayed in the movie was horrific, but the longer it continued the louder it preached. Evil is defeated by love and forgiveness. In absorbing the jealousy and hatred of his enemies into his body, Jesus broke the powers of redemptive violence and retributive justice. He was and is the unmistakable nonviolent, victorious hero. I experienced that triumph of the cross at a deep emotional and spiritual level. Not only the evil from without but also my sins from within had been overcome.—*Clarence Rempel, Newton, Kan.*

As I viewed the film I was moved by all that Christ suffered. However, the beating went too long and was too much.—*Carroll K. Walter, Quakertown, Pa.*

A day paralyzed

What if we chose to spend a day, every once in awhile, paralyzed under the enormity of our world and the injustices that smother it?

by Jennifer L. Esbenshade

A local family died in a fire from their Christmas tree. In a California mud slide, 13 dead. In a Benin airplane crash, 120 dead. In a Chinese natural gas well explosion, 190 dead. In an Iranian earthquake, 35,000 dead. And so concluded the Christmas season of 2003.

How easy it was to close the newspaper and resume the Christmas celebrations. How easy it was to tune out the world. My husband and I had longed for this Christmas celebration, since it was the first after three years abroad. We dreamed of meals of too much food with family members we had not seen in years. We longed for that bit of Christ's peace and love in tangible ways during our festivities. Yet the week seemed marred by the tragic.

For three years we had been surrounded by poverty and had daily reminders of God's love for the least of these. Now in the United States we could blanket ourselves in ignorance. We could forget. We had that choice.

But my mind kept drifting back to an Iranian father who had lost his wife and daughter in that terrifying earthquake. He was quoted telling the story of how his daughter had given him four kisses the night before the earthquake. When he asked her why four, she said she didn't know when she would see him again. A lone father was left clutching the last memory of his child.

Associated
Mennonite
Biblical
Seminary

AMBS
window

Listening well

June Alliman Yoder, D.Min., AMBS professor of communication and preaching

Spring 2004
Volume 14 Issue 2

❷ What I learned about preaching at AMBS

❸ Teaching of preaching to be enhanced

❹ President's Window
Panorama

As a teacher of preaching I often hear about poor preaching, but few people talk to me about poor listening. Most people who listen to sermons have very little power to control the content of a sermon or how it is preached. The one thing we can do something about is the effectiveness of our listening.

We can improve preaching by improving our listening. Try these suggestions:

Physical aids to effective listening

- Bring an alert self to worship. We can't listen if we are not awake. We must discipline ourselves to a good night's sleep on Saturday night.
- Choose a place in worship that minimizes the distractions and maximizes communication. The whole congregation can't sit in the front row, but it is a good place if you want to listen.
- Don't make yourself too comfortable. Try sitting on the edge of your seat and anticipate a strong message. There is a reason we don't have recliners in worship settings.

Mental aids to effective listening

- Taking notes or drawing images helps reinforce what listeners are hearing.
- Have your Bible open so you can refer to the text frequently.
- Listen for key ideas or images that might be new or useful to you.
- Minimize mental distractions. If things come to your mind that should be on your to-do list, write them down so you can attend to them later. Do not attend to them during the sermon.

Spiritual aids to effective listening

- Expect God to speak to you. I fear that many sermon listeners do not really expect anything to be given to them. Expectations are powerful in listening.
- Give care to your relationship with God. It can be difficult for God to speak to you through the preacher if you are not in the habit of listening to God. Listening to God is a habit that is cultivated in much the same way we cultivate other relationships.
- Pray for the preacher. Pray that the Spirit will minister to the preacher and that the preacher will courageously speak to the congregation what we need to hear.
- Remember there are many listeners. Perhaps other listeners' needs are being addressed today.

I urge all listeners to find ways to encourage the preacher. Pray that you will be relieved of a critical nature that easily finds fault. And, if you are asked to give feedback to the preacher, make sure it is loving and helpful. ●

J Tyler Klassen

What I learned about preaching at AMBS

I have discovered that every sermon combines an openness to God with the hard work of planning, creating and then communicating a message. While nothing develops a preacher more effectively than preparing and preaching a sermon Sunday after Sunday, at AMBS I was equipped with the tools for preaching.

I learned methods of biblical interpretation, was called to be open to God's leading, was taught a variety of preaching styles and strategies and was encouraged to boldly proclaim the good news through my gifts. Preachers and congregations around the world benefit from the education and encouragement AMBS provides for those called to preach.

Kevin Farmwald, Master of Divinity, 2000, pastor, Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

"Paaaayyy Attennntion!" proclaimed the one who would teach us to proclaim, Dr. June Alliman Yoder. "Pay attention to the text and pay attention to your people! Pay attention to the movement of God in your world!"

From the preaching lectures, the literature offered, and the labs, I was sent out as a messenger of God with this conviction: It is when the Word of God encounters the needs of the people that the Spirit of God, present in that moment, brings transformation and gives new possibilities for our world. What do we have to offer our world, our own people, if we do not offer them the Word of God?

Pamela Short, pastoral intern, Tedrow Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio, and AMBS student

Mary E. Klassen

Kevin Farmwald, Pamela Short, Jeremy Garber, Myrna Miller

Having been trained as an actor and a writer in college, I thought there wasn't anything new I could learn about preaching. AMBS showed me that preaching is an art form all its own.

Too often preachers either write out the entire sermon and read it with head down and eyes half-closed, or assume that the Spirit will lead them and end up with a confused ramble that leaves their congregation bewildered. In Foundations of Worship and Preaching, we learned to write a sermon rooted in the biblical text and to let it grow within us until we could preach the Word confidently and simply. Preaching is an art, and AMBS helped my artist of Scripture to grow.

Jeremy Garber, AMBS student from Goshen, Ind.

I arrived at AMBS knowing I could be an effective public speaker but not at all sure that I could be a preacher. How do you find something to preach week after week? Who was I to be delivering a word from the Lord?

I've learned that sermons emerge from deep study of the biblical text, from listening to the Holy Spirit's words to me and from listening to the needs of the congregation. While this isn't a novel idea, the practice of it is enough to send shivers down my spine. I have been increasingly aware of the movement of the Spirit as I listen for a message from the text, write the sermon and notice throughout the worship service where God is moving. I find it both humbling and exciting to have the opportunity to collaborate with the Spirit in preaching the word of God.

Myrna Miller, AMBS student from Hutchinson, Kan. Myrna was awarded third place in the Jennie Calhoun Baker Memorial Peace Sermon Contest administered by Bethany Theological Seminary, in spring 2003. ●

Teaching of preaching to be enhanced

To prepare people to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ—that declaration is at the top of the list in the statement of AMBS's mission.

Learning how to preach is part of the core curriculum for all students who are preparing to become pastors. To strengthen this facet of their learning, a new preaching chapel is planned in facilities changes that are coming on the AMBS campus.

The Next Generation campaign, a fund-raising effort to undergird the programs and facilities of AMBS, includes a special fund to create space where students will experience what it is like to preach in front of a congregation. A small chapel will be formed by expanding one of the classrooms in Waltner Hall, furnishing it as a chapel and equipping it for videotaping.

While classrooms are valuable for learning **about** preaching, this laboratory chapel will allow students to enter more fully into the experience of preaching. This will give them better preparation for ministry in a congregation.

In early March AMBS received statements of intent from two donors for the $177,000 needed to fund the preaching chapel.

For additional information about the Next Generation Fund and other projects included in it, see the chart at the lower right. ●

Mary E. Klassen

Gaining experience in preaching is part of the AMBS course, Foundations of Worship and Preaching. Students, like Neisha Walker and her classmates in this small group, preach in a laboratory setting early in their studies for the Master of Divinity degree, then continue developing their skills in congregations during later internships. When AMBS is able to create a preaching chapel with funding from the Next Generation campaign, a church-like setting will make this laboratory experience more realistic.

next Generation
AMBS Fund for Church Leadership

Resources on preaching

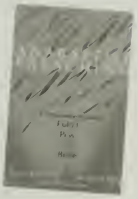
The Preaching Institute, coordinated by the AMBS Church Leadership Center, is a program designed to help those who preach to add to their creativity, confidence, and biblical integrity.

Through workshops, feedback and counsel from trained lay listeners, the Institute provides in-service training for those who desire to improve their preaching skills.

THE PREACHING INSTITUTE

The Preaching Institute is offered by AMBS in cooperation with Eastern Mennonite Seminary.

For more information, contact the AMBS Church Leadership Center, jglongenecker@ambs.edu, or see **www.ambs.edu** and select *Church Leadership Center.* ●



***Anabaptist Preaching:** A Conversation Between Pulpit, Pew & Bible* explores practices and issues of preaching that are unique or central to Anabaptist congregations. It is intended both for students preparing for ministry and for experienced pastors who wish to approach their preaching more reflectively and intentionally.

Published by Cascadia Publishing House in late 2003, this volume contains essays by three AMBS professors, June Alliman Yoder, Mary H. Schertz and Rebecca Slough. It is edited by David B. Greiser and Michael A. King. ●

Next Generation campaign

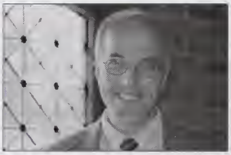
Next Generation, the fund-raising effort AMBS announced in December 2003, includes the following components. To find out more, see **www.ambs.edu/NextGeneration.**

	Goal	Received 3.05.04
AMBS Fund	$ 5,800,000	$5,161,764
Library and campus center	6,300,000	3,289,563
Chapel renovation	1,100,000	19,400
Preaching laboratory	170,000	177,000
Church Leadership Center	2,800,000	2,299,536
Scholarships	2,330,000	1,268,413
Endowed faculty chairs	1,500,000	1,056,158
Other		609,498
Total	$20,000,000	13,881,332 69.4%

President's Window

"I went into the pulpit so terrified I was ill," Diane Stone remembers. "America was at war and the Columbine shootings had just happened. People were afraid. And I was preaching my first sermon on *peace* in a church where the American Legion is strong, where men had served in the military, where members are not pacifists. In the middle of the sermon I felt so vulnerable that I literally glanced down to make sure I still had my clothes on!"

As a United Methodist student at AMBS, Diane reflects on the journey that brought her to ministry. Having abandoned the Christian faith of her parents while a teenager, she did not attend church for 30 years. Hunger for God took her to Iran where she worshipped as a Muslim for two decades. She lived through the tumultuous fall of the Shah, the rise of Khomeini, the American hostage crisis and Iran's devastating war with Iraq.



Eventually she returned to America, dissatisfied with answers to violence she had found both in Islam and in the Christian preaching she heard as a child. "I was raised in a liberal Protestant tradition where the minister saw *education* as the answer to violence: if only people could be made to understand the dire effects of violence, they would choose another way," she says. But that approach "does not come to terms with the power of evil."

When Diane found her way back to Christian faith in the United Methodist Church, she sought out AMBS—the closest seminary to her home in Michigan. "This place radiates the light and love of Jesus Christ," she says. "Here I came to see that nonviolence is not some kind of detachable extra to the gospel. It is part of discipleship, part of salvation."

Today in Michigan a former Muslim, trained at a Mennonite seminary, preaches with conviction in a Methodist pulpit. "You cannot just leap into the hard sayings of Jesus as a preacher. The congregation has to know that you love and respect them, and listen to them. When I preach the good news of reconciliation in Jesus Christ, I am transformed. It has to be real to me before it can be real to others when I preach."

Diane speaks with gratitude for what she learned at AMBS. I see the rich texture of faith and life experience she brings to the seminary. When students from eighteen denominations wrestle together with what it means to know and follow Jesus, lives are transformed—and those finding voice as preachers have something life-giving to say in the pulpit.

– *J. Nelson Kraybill*

Alumni News

John Lenshyn (Master of Divinity 1978) was granted a Doctor of Ministry from Providence Theological Seminary in April 2003. His research and dissertation examine the spirituality of, and ministry to, people living with Alzheimer's Disease.

Willmar T. Harder (Master of Divinity 2001) was ordained at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan., on February 29, 2004.

Jorge Vielman (Master of Arts: Peace Studies 2001), on the pastoral team of Iglesia Menonita del Buen Pastor, Goshen, Ind., was ordained January 25, 2004.

Michio Ohno (Bachelor of Divinity 1966), Chiba, Japan, was elected secretary for International Relations of Japan Mennonite Fellowship and will hold the office until 2006.

Mary E. Klassen

Tina Hildebrand, from Crystal City, Man., helped with a variety of projects, including this mailing to churches during the two months she and John, her husband, were volunteers at AMBS. They are the parents of AMBS student Dianne Hildebrand Schlegel.

Panorama

Pastors Week 2005

Marva Dawn, theologian, writer and popular Christian speaker, will be the featured presenter for AMBS Pastors Week 2005, January 24-27, 2005. She will address issues of leading in a time of technology and change. Watch for details on the AMBS web site.

Faculty writings

See the AMBS web site, **www.ambs.edu**, for information about new books by AMBS faculty.

Spring 2004
Volume 14 Issue 2

The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor and Designer: Mary E. Klassen
Photos by Mary E. Klassen

Distributed three times a year as a supplement to *Canadian Mennonite* and *The Mennonite*.

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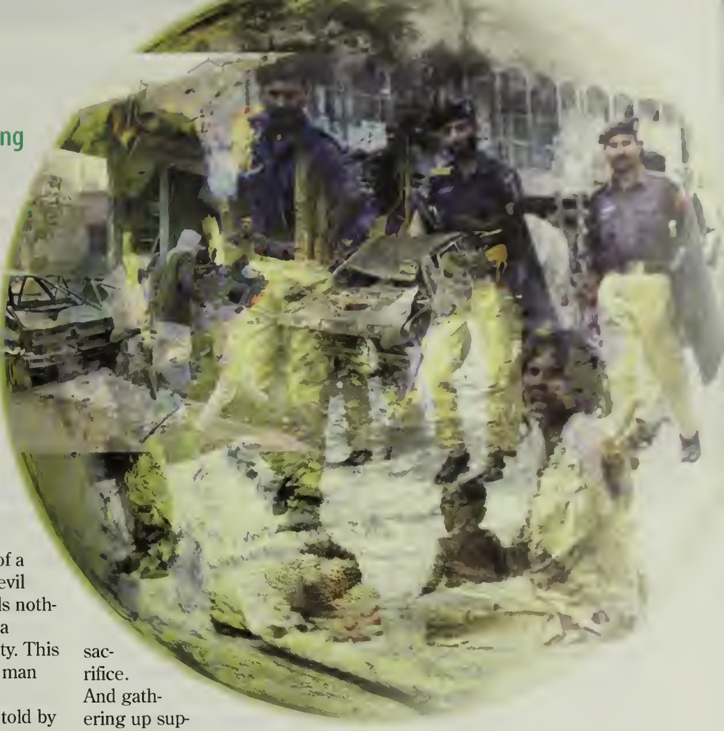
Maybe a day paralyzed by the suffering of the world will move us to our knees in prayer, then bring us to our feet in action.



As I read that story in the paper, my mind could not conjure up an image of a loving Iranian father, which I blamed as much on my lack of Muslim acquaintances as I did on the media. The image painted by the news is not a father who has hopes and dreams, who tucks his child in at night and kisses her softly on her cheeks. Rather it is of a man who has weapons of mass destruction, evil schemes and dastardly plots, a man who feels nothing but contempt and hatred. The one thing a Muslim man seems rarely to have is humanity. This is why we can so easily forget this nameless man and his broken heart.

But what if we do not forget? I have been told by many a sympathetic soul that if we focus on all the pain and suffering in the world we will become paralyzed by the sheer weight of its unbearable burden. But what of it?

AIDS orphans: What if we chose to spend a day, every once in awhile, paralyzed under the enormity of our world and the injustices that smother it? What if we truly wept for this father and his loved ones lost? What if we spent a morning contemplating how many children die from hunger and its related illnesses in our own country and around the world? What if we spent the afternoon reflecting on the AIDS orphans, or the war orphans, or the grandparents without any family? What if we spent the evening thinking about the immigrants dying on our borders or the political prisoners who refuse to be silenced with torture? What if we let this sorrow penetrate the depths of our souls? What would happen?

I would like to believe that the hustle and bustle would not seem as urgent to complete. What does it matter if we happen to choose the slowest lane at the check-out or that we got in a traffic jam or that we did not quite finish all we had wanted to that day? I hope our lives would come into a more global perspective and that our choices would take on pronounced significance. Suddenly that fair-trade coffee would not seem so expensive, since it was providing a living wage. Giving up a night to sort food at a local food pantry would not seem like a sacrifice. And gathering up supplies for a Mennonite Central Committee relief kit would not be an unusual task.

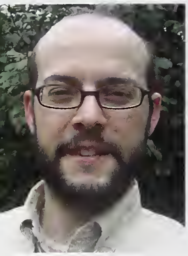
This "day paralyzed" would not be a day for depression and corporate guilt but one for active awareness of the world's well-being and our part in that. We would be moved to action rather than inaction. We would feel responsible to live in a way that reflected Jesus' life purpose: "to preach good news to the poor, … to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19). After reading these words from Isaiah, Jesus simply said, "Today this scripture is fulfilled" (verse 21). This was how God's love would be known.

Jesus often withdrew to pray, spending time alone, contemplating in the company of his Heavenly Father (Matthew 14:23 and Luke 6:12, for example). We don't know what he prayed about, but we do know that Jesus was troubled by the injustices around him and was moved to do something about it.

We should follow Jesus' lead. Maybe a day paralyzed by the suffering of the world will move us to our knees in prayer, then bring us to our feet in action.

Jennifer L. Esbenshade is a member of New Holland (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Death and taxes: the unconscionable connection



Timothy Godshall is outreach and development associate for the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund and a member of Mount Joy (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

No one argues the certainty of death and taxes. It is the connection between the two that weighs heavily on the consciences of many, especially during tax season.

In 2003, nearly 42 cents of every U.S. income tax dollar paid for the military. This year we will be asked to pay even more for high-tech weaponry while billions of dollars are cut from social programs. The President's 2005 budget proposal calls for a 7 percent increase in military spending. By comparison, the increase in domestic, non-homeland security spending is 0.1 percent (1/10th of 1 percent). When adjusted for inflation, this negligible increase is actually a net decrease in funding for domestic programs.

The Cold War gave rise to the Military Industrial Complex, but the Cold War's end has not brought about a decrease in military spending. Retired Admiral Eugene Carroll Jr. has assessed the situation in this way, according to the Center for Defense Information: "For 45 years of the Cold War we were in an arms race with the Soviet Union. Now it appears we're in an arms race with ourselves." The President's proposed military budget, $421 billion, exceeds the combined military budgets of the 25 next-largest military spenders in the world.

The U.S. military, funded by our tax dollars, does violence on two levels. Missiles, bombs and guns are designed to destroy. But even if they are never launched, dropped or fired, these weapons do violence by consuming resources that could have gone toward feeding the hungry, housing the homeless and healing the sick. Many people believe they cannot pay for this double violence.

Since World War II, U.S. draft law has acknowledged the right to conscientious objection to military participation. Draftees have been given alternatives to serve their country nonmilitarily. Tax law, however, continues to draft the dollars of conscientious objectors who see no moral difference between killing and paying for someone else to kill.

Despite the lack of legal recognition, conscientious objectors continue to refuse to pay for war, risking fines, bank account and property seizures, levies on their wages and sometimes jail sentences. Some even impoverish themselves and their families rather than be legally bound to pay such taxes. These are people driven by values born of conscience. In a country founded on ideals of freedom of religion and belief, shouldn't conscientious objectors to military taxation be given a way to pay their taxes without paying for war?

A bill currently before Congress, H.R. 2037, would provide just such an option. Called the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill, it would recognize conscientious objection for taxpayers who, on religious or ethical grounds, cannot participate in the funding of war or preparation for war. Taxpayers who now unlawfully withhold the portion of their taxes that supports military spending would be able to pay their full taxes once again, while still giving voice to their conscience.

The Peace Tax Fund Bill is molded in the image of conscientious objection to military service. It would not reduce an individual's tax liability or directly alter the level of military spending as established by Congress. It would channel the current military portion of an objector's income tax to life-affirming governmental programs.

A Peace Tax Fund would provide an opportunity for as many as 160 million taxpayers to examine their consciences each year on the question of war and taxes. Each year Congress would report the level of usage of the Peace Tax Fund, providing a measure of the nation's conscience regarding the inhumanity of war.

John Lewis (D-GA) introduced H.R. 2037 into the House of Representatives. It has 34 additional co-sponsors. Support for a Peace Tax Fund Bill has expanded beyond the historic peace churches to many mainline religious bodies who formally endorsed the Peace Tax Fund Bill as a matter of freedom of conscience.

"Both morals and sound policy require that the state should not violate the conscience of the individual," said Chief Justice Harlan Fisk Stone. "All our history gives confirmation to the view that liberty of conscience has a moral and social value which makes it worthy of preservation at the hands of the state. … It may well be questioned whether the state which preserves its life by a settled policy of violation of the conscience of the individual will not in fact ultimately lose it by that process."

The movement to respect freedom of conscience continues to grow. If this country is to live up to its founding ideals, conscientious objectors must be given alternative service for their drafted dollars.

For more information, call 888-PEACETAX or email info@peacetaxfund.org. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Cursed is the ground**—Esther Epp-Tiessen
- **Getting angry at God**—Kenneth L. Gibble

Denomination's financial picture improves

Byler: 'Contributions in churchwide system appear to have begun to stabilize.'

After learning that several churchwide agencies were cutting staff and reducing their budgets last fall, Mennonite Church USA constituents surprised denominational leaders with unexpected giving at year-end.

"Contributions in the churchwide system appear to have begun to stabilize," says Ron Byler, associate executive director for Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board. "The Executive Board, agencies and area conferences have had a difficult time the past two years bringing expenditures in line with expected income. We are hopeful that these challenges have bottomed out."

Mission Network, Mennonite Education Agency (MEA) and the Executive Board all report higher than expected bequest giving, and MMA's Mennonite Foundation is experiencing healthy giving to Mennonite Church USA agencies.

Income for the Executive Board was 10 percent more than expected during the fiscal year ending Jan. 31 due to increases in firstfruits giving by area conferences and increases in estate bequests from individuals. Area conferences also gave $60,000 above expectations; giving increased in 14 of 21 area conferences.

The overall financial picture in some area conferences is also improving. Western District Conference had giving increases that allowed it to restore some underfunded ministries that had been affected by the previous downturn (see related story at right).

Contributions to Mission Network's operating budget were down 2 percent in the recently concluded fiscal year. But overall gifts to Mission Network were up 7 percent compared with the previous year. This includes a 36 percent increase in estate gifts when compared to the previous year.

"We praise God for the provision that enables Mennonite Church USA to continue to be an instrument of healing and hope across the street and around the world," says Stanley Green, Mission Network's executive director and CEO.

In light of the decline in contributions to the operating fund, Mission Network staff kept expenditures 5 percent under budget and 7 percent under 2002-2003 levels. Giving toward the operating budget was $400,000 below projected totals.

Carlos Romero, MEA's executive director, offers his thanks to constituents. Congregational giving to the education agency of the church increased for the first time in nine years, and church matching grants (for student support) rose to a record high. In the grant system, congregations give to colleges, universities and seminaries, and the institutions match those funds with their own.

In 2003, total congregational support of Mennonite education through MEA was $3.02 million, up from $2.91 million in 2002. Of that total, church-matching grants were $2.16 million, and congregational giving was $864,000.

"We still have a ways to go toward overall giving," Romero says, "but the two categories of increase brought giving up $70,000 from the year before. That is tremendous; we want to celebrate."

Howard Brenneman, MMA's president and CEO, also has a positive outlook for the future. Giving to Mennonite Foundation in 2003 showed him that constituents believe in Mennonite Church USA's institutions, even though the new denomination is still building identity and support.

"MMA continues to be pleased with the long-term estate planning of Anabaptists that allow them to give generously to church-related institutions," he says. "There is a lot of money being transferred by people from their earnings in real estate, land, stock values and retirement into charitable giving on behalf of the denomination. That shows that people genuinely have a lot of faith in our institutions."

Giving to Mennonite Foundation hit a record in 2003 with contributions totaling $44.8 million and distributions to charities totaling $31.1 million.
—Laurie L. Oswald for Mennonite Church USA News Service.

There's a lot of money being transferred [through Mennonite Foundation] ... people genuinely have a lot of faith in our institutions.
—Howard Brenneman

AGRI-URBAN
Western District and South Central Conferences
Resource Library
AMBS-Great Plains

Laurie L. Oswald

$83,000 profit from cattle partnership

Agri-Urban, a partnership to raise cattle to benefit the work of the church, gives 50 percent of its profits each year to Western District Conference. The sale of cattle for $1.05 a pound in November 2003—a month before the Mad Cow frenzy—allowed the partnership to donate $37,000 to WDC, other institutions and Mennonite Church USA. WDC's contribution helped it finish 2003 with a positive annual balance and restore some underfunded ministries. WDC's conference minister Dorothy Nickel Friesen is pictured here with Delbert Peters, the outgoing treasurer for Agri-Urban.

CLC holds 10th meeting around tables

Participants look at identity and change, learn about servant leadership.

Stay together long enough, and even people with conflicts can become comfortable with each other.

At its 10th meeting, the Constituency Leaders Council (CLC)—a group that advises Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board and builds relationships among area conferences, churchwide agencies and constituency groups—continued that work March 15-16 in a settled atmosphere at a retreat center near Excelsior Springs, Mo.

We need to redefine the pastor's role to include training others.
—Keith Harder

The group, which meets twice each year, first got together in the fall of 1999. In the midst of a process that eventually led to the formation of Mennonite Church USA, that meeting included animated discussion about issues of membership. A practice initiated there and continued with much affirmation is having participants sit together in table groups of six to eight people.

Two outgoing CLC members who have been at each of the 10 meetings reflected on their experience. Joe Longacher of Virginia Conference noted that everyone there is committed to the church but comes from different perspectives.

Mary Lehman Yoder of Central District Conference said she has been "moved by the presence of the Spirit in this body of people." She found in CLC people willing to take risks, and she never felt her trust violated, she said.

Identity and change: Executive Board director Jim Schrag and associate director Ron Byler presented results from a churchwide communication and identity assessment (see Feb. 17 issue, pages 20-21). One of the messages from the assessment is that spiritual growth is an urgent issue for people.

Table talk: Sherm Kauffman (left), executive conference minister for Indiana-Michigan Conference, and Zenobia Sowell-Bianchi, a representative of African American Mennonite Association, at a table discussion during the Constituency Leaders Council meeting March 15-16

Phil Bergey, Executive Board staff associate, helped CLC members discuss change and transition and how uncertainty can release new creativity.

Servant leadership: One of the requests from last fall's CLC meeting was for leadership training. At this meeting, one morning was set aside for a workshop on servant leadership, led by Rick Stiffney, Lee Schmucker and Keith Harder, who work with the Institute of Anabaptist Leaders. They presented five leadership practices: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way and encouraging the heart.

At a separate, breakout session on lay leadership training, Marlene Kropf, director of the Executive Board's Office of Congregational Life, presented a proposal for a lay leadership/ministry team training event and invited feedback. Keith Harder, co-director of the Executive Board's Office of Ministerial Leadership, said, "We need to redefine the pastor's role to include training others."

Each CLC includes a report from one of the denomination's agencies. This was Mennonite Mission Network's turn. Executive director Stanley Green addressed questions about how the Network can work with area conferences in carrying out its mandate to "lead, mobilize and equip the church to participate in holistic witness to Jesus Christ in a broken world."

Not all of CLC was harmonious. Dissonant voices emerged about Mennonite Church USA's neglect of environmental concerns and of youth ministry. And a number of people felt there wasn't enough time in table groups. They like their table groups.—*Gordon Houser*

Mennonite Your Way

"travel with a purpose"

MARITIME PROVINCES
August 3-14

Additional Tour

Visit New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia

- New England coast & L.L. Bean
- New Brunswick farm area tour
- PEI north coast & red soil
- "Anne of Green Gables" musical
- A day on Nova Scotia's Cabot Trail
- Peggy's Cove & lobster dinner
- Visit Old Colony Mennonites
- Bay of Fundy - high & low tide
- Bar Harbor, ME & Acadia Park

*The September Maritime tour filled quickly, thus this **additional tour** is offered*

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Lancaster bishops recommend membership

Ministers to vote in September on whether or not to join Mennonite Church USA

If a recommendation by Lancaster (Pa.) Conference's Bishop Board receives approval, the largest area conference in the United States—with membership exceeding 17,500—will become part of Mennonite Church USA.

The conference's Leadership Assembly, the group to give final approval to that recommendation, had its first view of this proposal at its spring gathering March 15 in Lancaster. More than 450 ordained and licensed people—who make up the Leadership Assembly—and their spouses attended.

The group heard that, while not unanimous, the 23-member Bishop Board, Lancaster's policy-making body, had approved the recommendation to join Mennonite Church USA. Lancaster's constitution requires an 80 percent vote, which they met. When the Leadership Assembly takes action at its September meeting, a 75-percent affirmation will be necessary for the recommendation to pass.

Congregations and the denomination: "All Lancaster Mennonite Conference congregations are considered first and foremost members of LMC," the recommendation reads. It notes that congregations can choose to participate in Mennonite Church USA at various levels, and Lancaster Conference will respect their choices:

- "Those congregations that wish to participate fully in Mennonite Church USA are invited to do so and will need to declare such in writing to the conference office," the recommendation says.
- Congregations uncertain about their participation can continue to take time to decide.
- Congregations that prefer no participation in Mennonite Church USA will still be members of conference. Thirty-four of Lancaster's 185 congregations have indicated this is their stance.

This recommendation "offers a strong possibility for holding LMC together as a fellowship of congregations," says a rationale.

One affiliation only: Lancaster Conference will support the denomination financially at a level comparable to congregational participation—"as has been our practice over the last decades," the recommendation says. It also says "the only denominational affiliation available to Lancaster Conference congregations will be Mennonite Church USA."

No floor discussion of the recommendation occurred at the March meeting. That will happen at 13 cluster meetings of credentialed and lay people held from April through June.

However, bishops did anticipate questions, and several made comments on various issues.

Dale Stoltzfus, staff person for Mennonite Church USA's Ministerial Leadership Office and bishop of Lancaster's Landisville District, spoke about the denomination's membership guidelines, particularly those related to congregations that accept practicing homosexuals—a key point in Lancaster's hesitancy to join the denomination.

"Every conference and every congregation has taken the [membership] guidelines seriously," Stoltzfus told the Leadership Assembly. He said two congregations have been removed from membership by conferences and three that had been disciplined have been reinstated because they have agreed "to accept the teachings of the church."

Stoltzfus also reported that in a few instances conferences continue to work with congregations on their stand on the issue of homosexuality.

> This has been a long and arduous journey.
> —Paul Nisly

Carl Horning, Lancaster's assistant moderator and a representative to the denomination's Constituency Leaders Council, said the Bishop Board recommendation to allow congregations to choose how to relate to Mennonite Church USA is acceptable to other area conferences.

A long journey: "This has been a long and arduous journey," Bishop Paul Nisly of the Harrisburg District said. He noted that the conference has been working on a decision about denominational membership for almost 20 years.

"The process we have gone through is more than about our denominational affiliation," said conference moderator L. Keith Weaver in an interview after the assembly. "This journey has given us productive energy to work on issues like these."

Lancaster's Bishop Board is made up of 23 active bishops who oversee 26 districts that have a total of 185 congregations. The Leadership Assembly is comprised of all ordained and licensed people in the conference.—*J. Lorne Peachey*

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Relief kits and money help Haitians

MCC programs in health, reforestation and water continue through turmoil.

As a fragile calm descends on Haiti, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is working to assist victims of human rights abuses and families displaced by recent political upheaval.

MCC plans to provide 700 relief kits, valued at $28,000, canned meat (an amount still to be determined) and $45,000 in financial assistance. Most of the supplies and money will support the work of partner agency National Coalition for Haitian Rights (NCHR) as it cares for those who have been assaulted or driven from their homes because of their political affiliations. Two hundred of the relief kits will be sent through Church World Service (CWS) to some 500 Haitian refugees who fled from Haiti into the neighboring Dominican Republic and are living in a camp near the border.

"During the recent months of severe violence and repression, hundreds of Haitians were forced to leave their homes and towns," says Kristie van de Wetering, an MCC worker who serves with NCHR. Now many want to return but have found that their houses were looted or burned down.

"These individuals and families literally have nothing with which to rebuild their lives," says van de Wetering.

Benjamin Krause

Haitians in Miami. With the highest concentration of Haitians in the United States, the Miami area has been deeply impacted by ongoing turmoil in Haiti. MCC immigration workers in Miami assist Haitians there as well as through continuing programs in Haiti.

She emphasized that NCHR is committed to assisting those on all sides of the conflict. When Lavalas, the party of now-exiled president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was still in power, NCHR aided many victims of government brutality. Now that a new government is forming, the organization expects to see an upswing in Lavalas' supporters coming under attack and is equally committed to assisting them.

"With the first rebel attack and takeover on Feb. 5, the number of victims coming to NCHR increased even more significantly," she says. "But the violence on the street required that we take even more precautions."

With Aristide's departure, the crisis seems to have peaked, she says, but the fallout continues. For those trying to rebuild their lives, relief kits and financial assistance will offer not only practical aid but also remind Haitians that their plight has not been forgotten by Christians in the United States and Canada. MCC expected to ship the aid by the end of March.

MCC programs in most locations outside Port-au-Prince functioned normally through the crisis. Currently 32 adults and five children are part of MCC Haiti. At the height of the crisis, the team was gathered in Port-au-Prince for a regularly scheduled meeting; afterward, one family was unable to return to its assignment location due to the upheaval. They were home in the United States, with plans to return to Haiti by the end of March. Another worker flew home to Canada but plans to return to Haiti as soon as possible. All other workers have returned to their assignments, and MCC programs in health, reforestation and water continue as usual.—*Rachel B. Miller Moreland for MCC Communications.*

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Vietnamese Mennonites beaten by police

Ho Chi Minh City authorities continue to harass Mennonite leaders.

Local security forces on March 2 beat and detained associates of Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang, general secretary of the Mennonite Church in Vietnam and pastor of a house congregation in Ho Chi Minh City. When no information was given by March 10 about the health or whereabouts of the four men held, Pastor Nguyen Quang Trung, president of the Mennonite Church in Vietnam, delivered a letter to the Ho Chi Minh City authorities asking them to resolve the matter.

According to reports from a member of the congregation, who identified himself as "a Christian believer," the incident began when Quang and a pastoral assistant, Pham Ngoc Thach, took down the motorcycle license number of two undercover agents who had been watching them for several weeks and had threatened them and others. For self protection, they then reported this information to the local precinct.

When Thach and another associate pastor, Truong Tri Hien, took a photograph of the license plate, the two agents charged after them. The agents hurriedly left when approached by Quang and Ms. Lien, a lay leader in the church, but the agents' motorcycle spun out. As Lien and Thach approached them, the men got up, punched Lien in the chest and Thach in the face, then took off.

Within a half hour a large number of security and special armed police arrived and wrote up a complaint, accusing the church people of "disturbing the peace." The security police ordered men in civilian clothes to beat up the men who had documented their presence. Both Pastor Quang and Ms. Lien were severely beaten.

Nguyen Hieu Nghia, 24, a deacon of the church, was severely beaten, then taken to the precinct police station. When Thach, Nguyen Van Phuong and Nguyen Thanh Nhan, younger brother of Nghia, went to inquire about him, they were also detained.

Police beat Thach and Nhan unconscious, justifying the mistreatment by charging the young Christian leaders with "resisting an officer."

Later that day a policeman went to the home of Ms. Lien and threatened her and her father. The policeman also called on local people to threaten Pastor Quang.

"Isn't it enough that the authorities oppress people of religious faith?" Quang responded. "Now they also ask the people to do it."

Mennonites and other Christians are doing daily prayer walks in front of the police station. Church leaders call for prayer and appropriate action in support of the church.

The report from the "Christian believer" said, "Brothers and sisters, fellow believers and anyone who is struggling for religious freedom, please do all in your power to save us in a country which is undergoing hurtful persecution every day."
—Mennonite World Conference News Service

The security police ordered men in civilian clothes to beat up the men who had documented their presence. Both Pastor Quang and Ms. Lien were severely beaten.

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CALENDAR

Atlantic Coast Conference *spring delegate assembly,* April 24.

Eastern District Conference *spring session,* Zion Mennonite Church, Souderton, Pa., May 1.

Gulf States Conference *spring conference,* April 30-May 1.

Rocky Mountain Conference *spring assembly,* April 30-May 2, Palmer Lake, Colo.

Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto *open house* celebrating 21 years, May 7. 1774 Queen St. E., Toronto. 2:00-9:00 p.m.

White River Cheyenne Mennonite Church *centennial celebration,* Busby, Mont., May 28 - 30. Speaker Steve Cheramie Risingsun. Contact willisnadine@juno.com for more information.

WORKERS

Frederick, Emma, was licensed Feb. 8 for pastoral ministry at Deep Run Mennonite Church East, Perkasie, Pa.

Haines, Joe and Elaine, were installed Feb. 15 as co-pastors at Harris Hill Mennonite Church, Williamsville, N.Y. Elaine was licensed for ministry at the same service.

Kaufmann, Lois Johns, was ordained March 7 as pastor at Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Schrock, Amanda "Mandy" Yoder, was licensed Feb. 29 as pastor at First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis.

Vincent, Mark L., began Feb. 29 as interim pastor of Freeport (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Ackerson, Noah Isaiah, March 9, to Michael and Holly Ackerson, South Bend, Ind.

Baughman, Alyssa Rose, Feb. 19, to Robert Lewis and Janae Celeste Clark Baughman, Pulaski, Iowa.

Bontrager, Tyler James, Jan. 17, to Jim and Diane Hershberger Bontrager, McPherson, Kan.

Collins, Madison Neveah, Feb. 18, to Andy and Rene Shrock Collins, Sarasota, Fla.

Derstine, Adrianna Faith, Feb. 20, to Justin and Shannon Housel Derstine, Gilbertsville, Pa.

Gerber, Noah Cole, Feb. 25, to Troy and Lisa Smith Gerber, Harrisonburg, Va.

Halteman, Aidan Wade, March 12, to Andrew and Dea Landis Halteman, Quakertown, Pa.

Hazard, Abigail Faith, Feb. 3, to Robert and Leanne Shaw Hazard, Glens Falls, N.Y.

Keller, Josiah Robert, Dec. 16, to Chris Keller and Sheryl Meyers, Mount Joy, Pa.

Leister, Emma Joy, Feb. 24, to Nathan and Bronwen Souder Leister, Telford, Pa.

Martin, Annika Roeder, March 8, to Derek and Vickey Roeder Martin, Floradale, Ont.

Miller, Ryan Jay, March 1, to Ron and Lavonne Stutzman Miller, Landisville, Pa.

Moser, Eli Jacob, Feb. 18, to Joshua and Lisa Akin Moser, Carthage, N.Y.

Moser, Morgan Elizabeth, March 10, to Lawson and Leslie Moser, Lowville, N.Y.

Moyer, Melissa Christine, Feb. 18, to Thomas and Terri Moyer, Telford, Pa.

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SWISS-VOLHYNIAN MENNONITE HERITAGE (September 15-29)
LANDS of the BIBLE (September 17-30) • CHINA (October 3-19)
FALL FOLIAGE TOUR of NEW ENGLAND (October 4-10)
CHRISTMAS MARKETS in AUSTRIA and GERMANY (December 1-8)

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Murch, Caroline Driscoll, Feb. 29, to John and Jennifer Murch, Harrisonburg, Va.

Nolt, Victoria Saige, Feb. 3, to Justin Nolt and Chandra Wenger, Lancaster, Pa.

Pannabecker, Seth Ryan, March 9, to Tim and Jo Dewerse Pannabecker, Lancaster, Pa.

Regier, Avery Grace, Feb. 25, to Joel and Jennifer Kroeker Regier, Lincoln, Neb.

Ruebke, Mya Noelle, Feb. 18, to Tim and Amy Ruebke, Harrisonburg, Va.

Schmitz, Brooklyn Lovina, Feb. 29, to Chris Beauchamp and Lisa Schmitz, Conestoga, Ont.

Snyder, Allison Marie, Feb. 4, to Ben and Angela Allison Snyder, Goshen, Ind.

Springer, Lindsay Ann, Feb. 1, to Mike and Arabella Ramos Springer, Goshen, Ind.

Steffy, Kyle Bradley, Nov. 21, to Michael and Holly Zimmerman Steffy, Denver, Pa.

Stoltzfus, Denea Nicole, Feb. 17, to Daryl and Kimberly Stoltzfus, Gap, Pa.

Sundberg, Sven Christian Spencer, Jan. 27, to Scott and Wendy Sundberg, Claremont, Calif.

Weaver, Addison Marie, March 11, to Calvin and Jen Stuver Weaver, Hopedale, Ill.

Weaver, Kate Isabel, March 12, to Dean and Andrea Weaver, Harrisonburg, Va.

Wenger, Micah James, Jan. 18, to Jonathan and Tonya Ramer Wenger, Madison, Wis.

Zimmerman, Lauren Kate, Feb. 6, to Jeremy and Jill Ruth Zimmerman, Ephrata, Pa.

MARRIAGES

Basse/Bauman: Mary Basse, Wellesley, Ont., and Clifford Bauman, Elmira, Ont., Feb. 14 at Floradale (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Bezzo/Shantz: Gregory Bezzo, Simcoe, Ont., and Margaret Shantz, St. Jacobs, Ont., Feb. 14 at Waterloo (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Boe/Woelk: Gabriel Boe, Couer D' Alene, Idaho, and Joanna Woelk, Newport, Wash., March 20 at Word of Life Church, Newman Lake, Wash.

Busenitz/Friesen: Joy Busenitz, Whitewater, Kan., and Gentry Friesen, Aurora, Neb., Feb. 14 at Emmaus Mennonite Church, Whitewater.

Connolly/Kloostra: Lori Connolly, St. Jacobs, Ont., and Kevin Kloostra, St. Jacobs, Jan. 24 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

Conrad/Stutzman: Ron Conrad, Wayland, Iowa, and Christina Stutzman, Wayland, Feb. 7 in Nashua, Iowa.

Crossgrove/Hart: Janelle Crossgrove, Archbold, Ohio, and Christopher Hart, Ky., Feb. 29 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Hills/Tamargo: Angela Hills, North Canton, Ohio, and Brian Tamargo, North Canton, Feb. 21 at Hartville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Horst/Martin: Ben Horst, Evanston, Ill., and Janine Martin, Canby, Ore., Oct. 12 at Drift Creek Camp, Lincoln City, Ore.

Kramer/Waltner: Stacey Kramer, Freeman, S.D., and Jeremy Waltner, Freeman, Feb. 28 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Litwiller/Tackett: Jason Litwiller, Hopedale, Ill., and Angela Tackett, Hopedale, March 6 at Hopedale Mennonite Church.

Moss/Sands: Michelle Moss, Hopedale, Ill., and Kyle Sands, Hopedale, Feb. 28 at Hopedale Mennonite Church.

Pullman/Schnabel: Joyce Pullman, Freeman, S.D., and Steven Lee Schnabel, Menno, S.D., Feb. 7 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman.

DEATHS

Amstutz, George Calvin, 93, Walnut Creek, Ohio, died Feb. 28. Spouse: Frieda Amstutz. Parents: Elias and Lavina Baumgartner Amstutz. Children: Peter, Jon (deceased); three grandchildren. Funeral: March 2 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Auernheimer, Selma, 94, Reedley, Calif., died Feb. 10. Parents: Adolph and Clara Auernheimer. Funeral: Feb. 28 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

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Bergey, Ruth Rush, 86, Telford, Pa., died Feb. 17. Spouse: Harvey G. Bergey (deceased). Parents: William M. and Susie Detweiler Rush. Children: Harvey Dean, Paul M.; five grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 21 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Boldt, Gustav, 83, Reedley, Calif., died Feb. 13. Spouse: Marie Funk Boldt. Parents: Peter and Margaret Richert Boldt. Children: Edward, David, Larry; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 19 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Boose, Mabel H., 86, Lititz, Pa., died Feb. 22. Spouse: Charles H. Boose (deceased). Parents: Henry M. and Mary Kilmer Horning. Children: Janice Shank, Lois Thomas, Jean Hunsecker, Bertha Sattazahn; 10 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 25 at Landis Valley Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Borchardt, Darrell, 61, Wayland, Iowa, died Feb. 16. Spouse: Jayne Borchardt. Parents: Theodore and Malinda Borchardt. Children: Timothy, Tammy Sybil, Thomas; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Feb. 21 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Buller, Delores Schrag, 78, Henderson, Neb., died Feb. 23. Spouse: Peter Buller (deceased). Parents: John and Amelia Miller Schrag. Children: James, Robert; two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 27 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Christner, Willard, 78, Wellman, Iowa, died Feb. 6. Parents: Gideon A. and Hester Hochstedler Christner. Funeral: Feb. 9 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa.

Detter, Clela Wyse, 91, Archbold, Ohio, died Feb. 14. Spouse: Wilbur Detter. Parents: Jefferson and Emma Wyse. Child: Billye Miller; two grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 17 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Eckert, Bertha Sensenig, 95, Ephrata, Pa., died Jan. 24 of a heart attack. Spouse: Harvey W. Eckert (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Mary Alice Hurst Sensenig. Children: Richard S., Arlene Horst, Lorraine Sensenig; foster son Bruce E. Sensenig; 10 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 29 at Ephrata Mennonite Church.

Eucker, William, 76, Kingsley, Pa., died Feb. 9. Spouse: Janet Eucker. Children: Michael, William, David, Daniel, Susan, April, Carrie Lea, Donna Kay; 21 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 12 at Lakeview Mennonite Church, Susquehanna, Pa.

Friesen, David G., 90, Altona, Man., died Feb. 10. Spouse: Neta Funk. Parents: Abram D. and Anna Gerbrandt Friesen. Children: David Vernon, Joanne Kathryn Born, Norma Ruth Neudorf; six grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 13 at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite.

Goertzen, Viola Turner, 84, Newton, Kan., died Feb. 20. Spouse: Homer Goertzen (deceased). Parents: Orla David and Ina May Diehl Turner. Child: Debra Smith; two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 27 at First Mennonite Church, Newton.

Graber, Willis, 85, Wayland, Iowa, died Feb. 16. Spouse: Marjorie Watts Graber. Parents: Joseph and Barbara Rich Graber. Children: Larry, Wendell; foster daughter Vickie Paulsen; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 19 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Herr, Mary Z. Burkholder, 87, Lititz, Pa., died Jan. 28. Spouse: Benjamin B. Herr (deceased). Parents: Jacob Z. and Lizzie Zimmerman Burkholder. Children: John L., Vera Y. Burkholder, Arlene B. Orner, Faye E. Zimmerman, Janet L. Eshleman; 14 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 31 at Groffdale Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Hooley, Mary Lou Kanagy, 66, Lancaster, Pa., died March 5. Spouse: L. Joe Hooley. Parents: J. Forrest and Seba Yoder Kanagy. Children: Kevin, Keith, Kyle, Soni Friedman, Tina Lennon, 13 grandchildren. Funeral: March 11 at Forest Hills Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

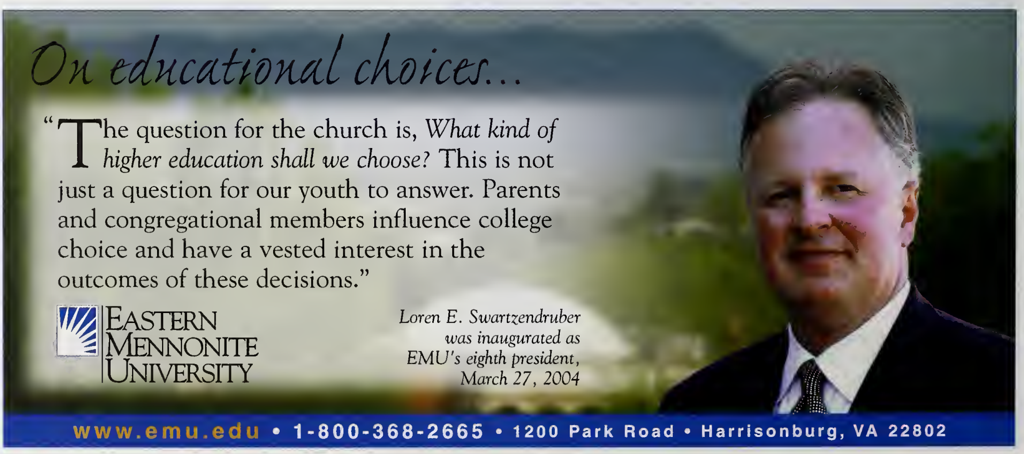
Jantzi, Alta Mae Helmuth, 83, Glendale, Ariz., died March 1. Spouse: Jerry J. Jantzi. Parents: John F. and Elizabeth Ann Miller Helmuth. Children: Gerald, Boyd, Ronald, Debbie Fitzpatrick; five grandchildren. Funeral: March 4 at Sunnyslope Mennonite Church, Phoenix.

King, Earl, 96, Lititz, Pa., died Dec. 29. Spouse: Emma Byler King (deceased). Parents: Aaron and Suzie Zook King. Children: Loretta, Harold, Janie, Ronald; 13 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 2 at Ridgeview Mennonite Church, Gordonville, Pa.

Klippenstein, Helen, 82, Winnipeg, Man., died March 3. Spouse: Henry A. Klippenstein (deceased). Parents: Peter D. and Susan Hiebert Wiebe. Children: Elsie Driedger, Elmer, Walter, Lawrence, Edward, Carolyn Penner, Doreen, Diane, Ronald; 20 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 7 at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Koehn, Virgie Unruh, 92, Moundridge, Kan., died Feb. 23. Spouse: Gus Koehn (deceased). Parents: Peter and Elizabeth Jantz Unruh. Children: Larry, Myrna Zielke, Shirlene Fulton, Glynda Schorn; 10 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 28 at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Kroeker, Deloris Janzen, 69, Henderson, Neb., died Feb. 27. Spouse: Melvin Kroeker. Parents: Jacob and Helena Peters Janzen. Children: Brenda Stauffer, Gaylene Hoadley; three grandchildren. Funeral: March 1 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.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Martin, Almeda Schallhorn, 91, Kitchener, Ont., died Feb. 15. Spouse: Edwin S. Martin (deceased). Parents: Josiah and Elizabeth Lichty Schallhorn. Children: Ron, Elaine Schlueter, Rene Rauchfleisz; four grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 18 at St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Martin, David F., 79, Floradale, Ont., died Jan. 15. Spouse: Venerva Burkhart Martin. Parents: Elias and Leavea Frey Martin. Children: Margaret Legate, Gerald, Doris Herbison, Keli, Roy; eight grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 18 at Floradale Mennonite Church.

Mellinger, Charles W., 82, New Holland, Pa., died Jan. 16. Spouse: Mabel Nolt Mellinger. Parents: Roland and Lizzie Seible Mellinger. Children: Charles, Ruth Youndt, Doris Summers, Jere; 10 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 21 at Groffdale Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Miller, Mildred R., 89, Belleville, Pa., died March 3. Spouse: Harvey J. Miller (deceased). Parents: Joseph N. and Mary M. Yoder Byler. Funeral: March 6 at Locust Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Miller, Rachel Anna Yingling, 95, Baltimore, Md., died Feb. 10. Spouse: Edward K. Miller (deceased). Parents: Jesse E. and Effie T. Smith Yingling. Children: Sarah Leah Spence; stepson E. Earl Miller (deceased); four grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 15 at North Baltimore Mennonite Church.

Nice, Hannah S., 89, Souderton, Pa., died Feb. 18. Spouse: Frank K. Nice (deceased). Parents: Howard M. and Lizzie Ann Clemmer. Child: Shirley A. Lilley; four grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 21 at Bergey, Williams, Koffel Funeral Home, Franconia, Pa.

Roth, Ruth E., 82, Elkhart, Ind., died Feb. 7. Spouse: Earl Roth. Parents: Frank F. and Anna Jantzen. Children: Yvonne Smith, Loren, Mark; four grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 14 at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Schrock, Wilma Pomeranz, 65, Archbold, Ohio, died March 6. Spouse: Ray Schrock. Parents: Frank and Rosella Seiler Pomeranz. Children: Lyndon, Larry, Linda Lawson; two grandchildren. Funeral: March 10 at North Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Sommers, Ada M. Yoder, 78, Hartville, Ohio, died Feb. 26 of cancer. Spouse: Ervin Sommers (deceased). Parents: Homer D. and Nancy Bontrager Yoder. Children: Stephen, Paul, Ann, Nancee Moss, Miriam Weirich; seven grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: March 1 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Sommers, Allen A., 77, Uniontown, Ohio, died Feb. 28. Parents: Allen B. and Elizabeth Miller Sommers. Funeral: March 2 at Hartville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Springer, Clara Unzicker, 95, Glendale, Ariz., died Feb. 20. Spouse: Elmer Springer (deceased). Parents: William and Anna Unzicker. Children: Frederick, Theodore; five grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 24 at Glencroft Community Church, Glendale.

Stauffer, Bertha Good, 95, Ephrata, Pa., died Dec. 7 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Mahlon S. Stauffer (deceased). Parents: Aaron and Mary Brendle Good. Children: Alverta Martin, Mildred Wissler, Wayne, Janice Thomas; nine grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 11 at Ephrata Mennonite Church.

Stauffer, J. Mark, 85, Chambersburg, Pa., died March 14. Spouse: Eva Hostetter Stauffer (deceased). Parents: John L. and Lydia K. Stauffer. Children: Evelyn Baer, Margaret Corle, John M.; eight grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 17 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Thomas, Irene Miller, 73, Berlin, Ohio, died March 5. Spouse: Paul Thomas. Parents: Solomon and Ida Miller. Children: Ron, Missy Short, John, Sally Krabill; five grandchildren. Funeral: March 9 at Martin's Creek Mennonite Church, Millersburg, Ohio.

Wenger, Elva Huber, 96, Ephrata, Pa., died Feb. 18. Spouse: Luke M. Wenger (deceased). Parents: Landis and Ellen Brubaker Huber. Children: Elizabeth A., Robert B., Luke H.; two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 23 at Metzler Mennonite Church, Ephrata.

Wiens, Leonard, 82, Hesston, Kan., died March 1. Spouse: Florence Wiens. Parents: Henry and Anna Enns Wiens. Children: Max, Karen, Patty; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 6 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Zuercher, Verda Delight, 88, Kidron, Ohio, died Dec. 28. Spouse: Ivan J. Zuercher (deceased). Parents: Peter J. and Barbara Schneck Amstutz. Children: Linda Sommer, Paul, Carol Brubaker; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 31 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

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To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Marla Cole, or email TheMennonite@TheMennonite.org.

Eastern Mennonite University invites applications for a one-year, full-time ***vocal/choral*** faculty position for 2004-2005. Master's degree required, doctorate preferred. Area of specialization: voice; area of competence: choral conducting. Candidates must have experience with college-level students. Performance experience is preferred. EMU seeks faculty with evidence or promise of teaching excellence in a Christian, liberal arts environment, committed to ongoing scholarship, who are familiar with and supportive of Anabaptist-Mennonite Christian faith practices.

Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts and three references to Marie S. Morris, Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or email ugdean@emu.edu, www.emu.edu. Review begins immediately. Salary and rank determined by education and experience. AAEO employer. Persons who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

Eastern Mennonite University seeks part-time ***pastoral ministry program director,*** Lancaster, Pa., to implement an associate degree-level program for pastors in Lancaster Mennonite Conference. Will increase to full-time in future. Master's degree in pastoral/theological field and pastoral experience required. Doctor's degree preferred. Experience in adult education including expertise in nontraditional delivery systems preferred. Position open July 2004.

Candidates send letter of application, vitae, transcripts and three references to Beryl Brubaker, Academic Provost and Graduate Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, or email to provost@emu.edu. Review will begin immediately. AAEO employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

Camp Friedenswald seeks a qualified, Christian individual for a full-time salaried position as ***maintenance assistant.*** Responsibilities include upkeep of buildings and grounds, basic repairs, operating small machinery and working with volunteers. Benefits include salary, housing, utilities, full medical coverage, retirement and some meals. Contact Todd Kirkton, executive director, for information; todd@friedenswald.org; 269-476-9744.

Landis Homes, a Continuing Care Retirement Community located in a rural setting southeast of Lititz, Pa., is seeking a ***vice president of resident services*** providing administrative supervision and guidance to resident programs and services in health care, assisted living, residential living, home services and adult day services. Qualifications include a college degree in health administration or related management field, budgetary and financial management skills/experience and registered nurse (RN) licensure or health-care/clinical experience preferred. A nursing home administrator license and supervisory experience in long-term care are helpful.

Submit resumé to Human Resources, Landis Homes, 1001 E. Oregon Road, Lititz, PA 17543; fax 717-581-3899; email aheinly@landishomes.org. For more information about Landis Homes, visit our Web site, www.landishomes.org.

Goshen College is accepting applications for the position of ***director of the entrepreneurship learning center*** (ELC) in the business department at Goshen College. The successful candidate will provide leadership for the new ELC. The director has responsibility for strategic planning, program operation, marketing, budgeting, curriculum, communication and teaching two courses annually. The position will be highly visible in the surrounding community. The initial time frame for this grant-funded position is three years (July 2004-June 2007). Master's or Ph.D. degree preferred with experience as an entrepreneur or experience working with entrepreneurs.

To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, www.goshen.edu/employment. Women and minority persons are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

Camp Deerpark is seeking to fill the position of ***food service director.*** This person is responsible for all aspects of food service, including planning menus, food preparation and supervision of kitchen volunteers and staff. Salaried position with benefits, including housing and insurance. Camp Deerpark is owned and operated by the New York City Mennonite Churches and offers people of all ages, races and backgrounds the opportunity to enjoy Christian camping at an affordable price. For more information please contact Ken Bontrager at 845-754-8669 or Deerpark@warwick.net.

Light of Life Mennonite Church seeks part-time ***pastor*** to lead growing 10-year-old multicultural church at Farmington, N.M. Located in the northwest corner of the state, Farmington lies at the edge of the Navajo reservation, near the Four Corners, an hour from the nearest ski resort and near many world famous cultural and geographical wonders. Applicant should have calling to serve in preaching and teaching, encouraging and discipling new believers. Contact Dan Spare, chair, Search Committee, 3808 Country Club Drive, Farmington, NM 87402; phone 505-324-8288; email mdspare@asae.org.

Anabaptist-Mennonite Time Line. The ***original Anabaptist-Mennonite Time Line*** is back in print and available for a limited time, while supplies last. This classic 36 in. x 96 in. wall resource charts Anabaptist-Mennonite happenings from 1425 to 1986, with content by Robert Kreider. Events are depicted in the context of wider religious, political, economic and cultural developments. $69.99 U.S., $97.99 Cdn. To order, call 800-245-7894.

Mellinger Mennonite Church, a 400-member congregation in Lancaster, Pa., is seeking candidates for lead ***pastor.*** Candidates should have strong biblical and Anabaptist beliefs, be good in preaching and administration, and be able to work well in a team ministry. Please contact Paul M. Zehr, 209 Henrietta Ave., Lancaster, PA 17602; phone 717-299-6104; email zehrpm@emu.edu

Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College invites applications for a full-time ***development officer.*** The Merry Lea development officer will initiate donor contacts, solicit gifts, plan donor events and coordinate capital fund-raising activities. All donor relationship-building activities are in support of the mission of Merry Lea. The development officer reports to the executive director of Merry Lea and works in partnership with the Goshen College Advancement Department. Bachelor's degree required. Master's degree or equivalent experience preferred. Fund-raising experience in educational institutions preferred, three to five years minimum, or other related experience in business, organizational leadership, sales, etc.

To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, www.goshen.edu. Women and minority persons are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Administrative and teaching faculty members are expected to share this commitment.

Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College invites applications for a newly opened, full-time position in ***agroecology.*** The academic focus of this position is in the field of agroecology. The assistant professor of agroecology is responsible for designing and teaching pilot courses in the summer program. The role of the collegiate program director includes program development, student recruitment, grant writing and collaboration with other institutions of higher education and professional organizations. The programs and pedagogy will utilize Merry Lea's distinctive field opportunities. A graduate degree in an area of agroecology is required, with preference given to candidates with a doctorate and/or significant relevant work experience related to the administrative functions of the job description.

To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, www.goshen.edu. Women and minority persons are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Administrative and teaching faculty members are expected to share this commitment.

Spruce Lake Retreat, a dynamic, multifaceted camping ministry relating to the Mennonite Church, seeks a ministry-minded person with fund-raising experience to serve at least three-quarter-time as ***development associate.*** This person will work alongside our development director in soliciting gifts for our current major capital campaign and in planning and coordinating fund-raising activities. Salary and liberal benefits package provided. On-camp housing may be available if needed, or applicant may work out of their home community if within a reasonable proximity. Spruce Lake Retreat is located in the Pocono Mountains of northeastern Pa.

Send resumé to Executive Director, RR 1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; phone 800-822-7505; fax 570-595-0328; email director@sprucelake.org.

Eastern Mennonite University, Lancaster, Pa., branch, seeks ***director*** for the M.A. in Education program. Director will provide leadership to M.A. in Education program and teach courses. Ph.D. preferred. Responsible for vision, marketing, recruitment and candidate advisement. Position open July 2004. EMU seeks persons who are supportive of Anabaptist-Mennonite Christian faith practices.

Candidates send letter of application, vitae, transcripts and three references to Beryl Brubaker, Academic Provost and Graduate Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, or email provost@emu.edu. Review will begin immediately. AAEO employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

Hesston College invites applicants for the position of ***theater director*** to begin August 2004. Responsibilities of this two-thirds-time position include directing the theater program and teaching theater classes. Depending upon the candidate's qualifications, additional courses will be added to this position to complete a full-time load. Qualifications include directing experience, teaching experience, innovative spirit, love of students and commitment to Mennonite higher education, Mennonite Church USA and the mission of Hesston College. M.F.A. preferred, M.A. considered.

Send letter of interest, vita, evidence of theater direction experience, three reference letters and official transcripts to Marc Yoder, Academic Dean, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062, or email inquiries to marcusy@hesston.edu. Review of applications begins immediately and continues until the position is filled.

Lake Center Christian School is accepting applications for the following positions: full-time ***special needs coordinator***; full-time ***J.H./H.S. science teacher***; part-time ***phys. ed. teacher***; part-time ***Spanish teacher.*** LCCS is a K-10 school (adding 11th and 12th over the next two years) of 500 students in the Akron-Canton area. For an application and further information, contact Matt McMullen, Superintendent, at 330-877-2049, ext. 32 or lccsmmcmullen@yahoo.com. Lake Center Christian School, 12893 Kaufman Ave. N.W., Hartville, OH 44685.

Hesston College is reopening its search for president of the college.

Founded in 1909, Hesston College is a fully-accredited two-year liberal arts institution. Its 50-acre residential campus is located in Hesston, Kansas. Hesston College, the two-year college of Mennonite Church USA, educates and nurtures each student within Christ-centered community, integrating thought, life, and faith for service to others in the church and the world. Its 440 students come from about 30 states and 15 countries, including Canada.

The ideal candidate should have advanced academic experience, an Anabaptist Christian faith commitment, strong intellectual and relational leadership qualities, proven abilities in organizational development and fiscal management, and the ability to understand and communicate effectively with diverse constituencies.

Submit nominations and applications to Norm Yoder, Chair, Hesston Presidential Search Committee, c/o Hesston College, PO Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062, or e-mail nyoder@telcoweb.net. Include contact information for the potential candidate and rationale for the recommendation.

EOE. Persons who bring gender, ethnic, and cultural diversity are strongly encouraged to apply.

Hesston College

Start Here, Go Everywhere

Kraybill Mennonite School, Mount Joy, Pa., is accepting applications for ***elementary teacher*** grades 1 and 2 beginning August 2004. Call for an application or send resumé to John Weber, 598 Kraybill Church Road, Mount Joy, PA 17552; phone 717-653-5236; email jweber@kraybill.pvt.k12.pa.us. Visit the school on our Web site, www.kraybillmennonite.org.

Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio, is seeking candidates for the full-time position of ***minister of youth.*** Candidates should have strong Anabaptist beliefs and have a passion for children, youth and young adults. Full job description is available by contacting Kelvin Friesen at 419-445-0856 or kelfriesen@rtecexpress.net.

Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore., is seeking ***youth ministry candidates*** for its high-school resident program. Responsibilities include mentoring students, planning and supervising dorm activities. Two individuals, M/F, or a couple are required for the weekend and a male for the weekday program. Full-time volunteer positions starting Aug. 16; volunteer benefit package. Contact Sherri-Lynn Wenger 866-343-9378 or sherriwenger@hotmail.com.

Mennonite Central Committee U.S. is looking for a visionary and energetic woman to lead the work of Women's Concerns to the next level as ***women's concerns director.*** Responsibilities include leading and overseeing domestic violence/sexual abuse programming, organizing dialogical forums on issues important to women and carrying out advocacy work on anti-sexism. These tasks provide a chance to work collaboratively with an energetic and creative peace and justice team in the Akron, Pa., office. This is a full-time position that involves some travel. Requirements include commitment to Anabaptist-Mennonite theology and practice; expertise in women's issues and peace work; strong writing, editing and speaking skills; interest and ability in networking with a broad range of constituent women and ability to work with church structures.

For more information, please contact Prem Dick, psd@mcc.org, or Anna Reimer, awr@mcc.org, 717-859-1151, MCC Human Resources Department, Akron, Pa.

MCC needs an ***East Asia director*** in Akron, Pa. This person is responsible for programs and workers in Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Japan, North and South Korea and Taiwan. Experience in East Asia required, preferably at primary and management levels. Demonstrated administrative, supervisory and relational skills needed, along with a Christian faith, active church membership and commitment to nonviolent peacemaking.

Contact Charmayne Brubaker, 717-859-1151, cdb@mcc.org or your nearest MCC office for a job description. Application review begins immediately. Position available in June.

Hesston College seeks applicants for the position of ***admissions counselor.*** Qualifications include good communication and organizational skills, commitment to Mennonite higher education and familiarity with Mennonite Church USA. The counselor will develop and implement a territorial recruitment plan, build relationships with top prospects and applicants, telemarket, travel and represent Hesston College at churches and high schools. Bachelor's degree preferred. Position available early summer.

To apply, send resumé and references to Clark Roth, Vice President for Admissions, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062. For more information, email clarkr@hesston.edu or phone 800-995-2757. Hesston College is an equal opportunity employer.

Anabaptists! *Anabaptist Connections* newsletter available. Newsletter reviews Swiss-Anabaptist reconciliation status and timely articles. Also the book *Rekindling the Anabaptist Flame*. $10 P.P.D. Phone 406-293-2442 or 406-293-2980; HCR61 Box 140RD, Bonners Ferry, ID 83805.

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School seeks applicants for the following ***sabbatical fill-in teaching positions*** for the 2004-05 school year: physics, English (first semester) and media center director (second semester). Send resumé to Elaine A. Moyer, Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446; fax 215-362-2943; email camoyer@christopherdock.org.

RESOURCES

Reading the Gospels in the Dark: Portrayals of Jesus in Film by Richard Walsh (Trinity Press International, 2003, $18) explores how Jesus films cast light on interesting literary and mythical features of the Gospels and on American culture. For example, *Jesus of Montreal* offers fresh understanding of Mark 13, and *Shane* and *Pale Rider* demonstrate that Americans desperately want a conquering hero—who is not a capitalist or an imperialist—to deal with their frustrations.

Decoding Mark by John Dart (Trinity Press International, 2003, $20) unlocks ancient, puzzle-like writing devices called chiasms, found throughout Mark, to reconstruct the original Gospel. He recovers passages from the *Secret Gospel of Mark*—a once-disputed find—that the pattern of chiasms repeatedly indicates had been deleted from the original Mark.

Anabaptist Preaching: A Conversation Between Pulpit, Pew and Bible, edited by David B. Greiser and Michael A. King (Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2003, $22.95), ponders the Anabaptist perspective on preaching. Writers include Nancy R. Heisey, Dennis Hollinger, Lynn Jost, Renee Sauder, Mary Schertz, Nathan D. Showalter, Rebecca Slough, David A. Stevens, Ervin R. Stutzman, Mark R. Wenger, Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm, June Alliman Yoder and the editors.

Crazy Quilt: Pieces of a Mennonite Life by Cynthia Yoder (Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2003, $14.95) is a memoir of a woman who suffered depression, then found recovery and hope for her broken marriage after exploring the stories of her Pennsylvania Dutch grandparents. It includes stories, diary entries, old photographs and recipes.

Spiritually Incorrect: Looking for God in All the Wrong Places by Dan Wakefield (SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2003, $21.95) uses candor and wit to show that there are as many ways to find spiritual fulfillment as there are individual seekers.

The Jewish Approach to God: A Brief Introduction for Christians by Neil Gillman (JewishLights Publishing, 2003, $16.95) guides readers through the different ways the Jewish people have related to God, how each originated and what each may mean.

Mere Discipleship: Radical Christianity in a Rebellious World by Lee C. Camp (Brazos Press, 2003, $14.99) sets forth the vision of what it means to truly follow Christ in the 21st century. Camp challenges Christians to put obedience to Jesus as Lord ahead of allegiances to all earthly authorities.

Whose Religion Is Christianity? by Lamin Sanneh (Eerdmans, 2003, $12) takes the form of a self-interview in which Sanneh asks about the cross-cultural expansion of Christianity and provides insightful answers and meaningful predictions. He argues that the gospel is not owned by the West and that the future of the tradition lies in its "world" character.

The Essence of Christianity by Bruno Forte (Eerdmans, 2003, $22) upholds the heart and meaning of Christianity despite the claims of the contemporary world. Forte restates what is unique, reliable and universal about Christianity for our current age.

The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth by David Bentley Hart (Eerdmans, 2003, $55) meditates on the power of the Christian understanding of beauty to rise above the violence—both philosophical and literal—characteristic of the postmodern world.

Illuminations: A Book of Poetry by Joseph S. Hertzler (2003) is available from Greencroft Nursing Home, Goshen, IN 46526.

thank you donors!

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Thanks to all who contributed to *The Mennonite*'s operating budget in the past year. We concluded our most recent fiscal year on Jan. 31, 2004, with yet another record for contibutions: $59,868. We are deeply grateful for this financial support as well as for the many encouraging notes that accompanied your contributions.

For those interested, The Mennonite, Inc., posts a full audit of its financial activity each year at www.TheMennonite.org (click on "About *The Mennonite*"). We will also send you a copy of the financial statement by mail if you call 574-535-6051.

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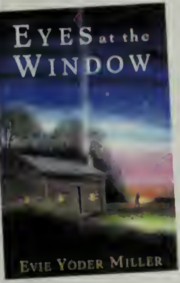
Good to Read, Good to Discuss



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A gripping historical novel, set on the Pennsylvania-Ohio frontiers from 1810-1861.

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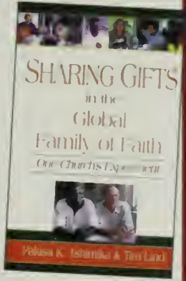
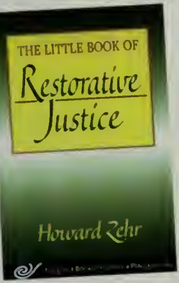
Sharing Gifts in the Global Family of Faith *by Pakisa K. Tshimika and Tim Lind*

As the "center" of Christianity has moved south to Africa, Asia, and Latin America, what gifts can churches in different parts of the world truly share with each other? Are churches in Europe and North America willing and able to *receive*, as well as *give*? An African and a North American reflect together. Full of many insights and examples. *Study Guide* available. **$6.95, paperback**





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Everett J. Thomas

A flesh-and-blood Easter church

Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."—Matthew 26:27-28

During the next week, millions of Christians around the world will hear these words before taking a sip of wine or a piece of bread. These words of Jesus—spoken during his last supper with his disciples—will be recited at countless Maundy Thursday and Easter services, just as they have been for centuries.

To join the flesh-and-blood Easter church Jesus created, we must understand what his words meant to his followers in that Ancient Near Eastern world. Otherwise, the act of Communion—eating the flesh of Jesus' body and drinking his blood—becomes an empty anachronism devoid of the mystery of God's astonishing grace and power.

June Alliman Yoder, who teaches preaching at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., once described how powerful the Communion story is for cannibals when they hear it from missionaries. According to June, cannibals hear this story in the context of eating slain enemies so that they can ingest their enemy's courage and honor.

As we participate in Communion we recognize our unity with all believers everywhere at all times.

The disciples would have understood Jesus' offer of his flesh and blood in a similar way: Those who take the cup and the loaf are connecting physically to Jesus' life-giving power. They also understood implicitly that in such actions Jesus was naming himself—in what we know as Old Testament language—the sacrificial Lamb of God offered to save the world from sin.

Old Testament sacrifice language may have little meaning for some of us today. But the final purpose does: All who eat and drink are connected in a physical way. As we participate in Communion, "we renew our baptismal covenant with God and with each other," says Article 12 in Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, "and recognize our unity with all believers everywhere at all times."

To the modernist, who is willing to believe something only if it can be proven scientifically, it is foolish to care that millions of people participate in such a ceremony or that doing so expresses a unity across all time and history. To the postmodern mind, the Communion tradition is relegated to the pile of ancient ideas on which all other curiosities are stacked—or taken out occasionally as a historical or cultural oddity.

But the Lord's Supper—eating Jesus' flesh and drinking his blood—is the central act of Easter for Christians everywhere.

"As we partake of the Communion of the bread and the cup," says our confession of faith, "the gathered body of believers shares in the body and blood of Christ and recognizes again that its life is sustained by Christ, the bread of life."

The commentary to Article 12 says the same thing even more directly: "As Christians eat the bread and drink from the cup, they experience Christ's presence in their midst."

This ancient ritual of eating and drinking—the only element of worship that uses the sense of taste—is a moment when we physically and organically become the body of Christ.

But our confessional statement goes even further. It declares that when we participate in Communion we are declaring our unity "with all believers everywhere at all times." That includes Christians who hold different convictions from us. It includes people who have lived in the past and Christians who will live in the future.

The body of Christ has been alive on this earth for centuries and will continue—long after we are gone—until Jesus' return. Each time we drink from the cup and eat of the bread, this radical act of remembrance empowers us to be the flesh and blood of Christ for our world today.

When you eat the bread this Easter Sunday, close your eyes and imagine all the Christians around the world who also have a taste of bread on their tongues. As we all take Communion—and nutrients from the bread and the wine are absorbed into our bodies—we signify the living, breathing body of Christ in the world today.—*ejt*

The Mennonite

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'cursed is the ground'

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The power of enough

Clarence E. Rempel is a pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

I am part of a consumer society bent on finding happiness in the acquisition of more stuff. The average house in the 1950s was 900 square feet and often built without a garage. In the 1970s the average house was 1,400 square feet, with a double garage. The average home today is 2,300 square feet, with the triple garage becoming the new standard. Why do we need all that space? It's not because of larger families. We need it to store stuff.

Licensed cars in the United States now exceed the number of licensed drivers. When is enough enough? How do we get off this consumer merry-go-round of anxiously getting more and more stuff?

1. Enough is not created by circumstances. The Apostle Paul writes, "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances" (Philippians 4:11 NIV). Paul was writing out of the deprivations of being a prisoner of Rome. "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty" (v. 12). Paul's contentment did not depend on good circumstances. Often we think, If I just had a little more, I'd be satisfied. If I could have a car with 50,000 less miles. If I could get a new outfit once a season. If I we could go out and eat once a week, then I'd be happy.

In his book *The Power of Enough*, Lynn Miller writes: "We are here, the TV tells us, to be consumers: to buy and accumulate and store and buy more. We are here to be consumers because consuming will make us happy! The problem is, it isn't working. We're not happy! … In the U.S. we have more stuff than anyone in the world at any time in history, but we still are not happy." Miller notes that the best-selling medication in the United States is Xanax, an anti-anxiety pharmaceutical.

2. Enough is an acquired behavior. In Philippians 4:12, Paul writes, "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want." Enough is an educated mind-set; it is an adjusted attitude; it is an acquired behavior.

Part of this learning is recognizing the cultural lies and saying no to them. One of the cultural lies is that you are a consumer. That label implies that you are a person of bottomless appetite. You were created to use things and use them up. But you were not created to use stuff up; you were created to take care of God's stuff. So when you are labeled a consumer by that TV commentator, talk back. "I am not a consumer. I am a caretaker of God's creation. I am a citizen of God's kingdom." That is my identity. Caretakers and citizens behave differently from consumers.

3. Enough is not readily experienced. Paul calls enough a "secret." It is counterintuitive. It is countercultural. Our culture is saturated with more, bigger, better, stronger, newer or—if you are into antiques—older.

Trying to be more than we are by owning or wearing something does not work because there is no end to it. Someone else always has more.

4. Enough is essentially a spiritual reality. In Philippians 4:13, Paul let's out the secret: "I can do everything through him who gives me strength." I can live in contentment through Jesus Christ. I can renounce the cultural lies and live in the enough of being blessed by God.

What's true for Paul is also true for the Christians at Philippi. "And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (v. 19). Do you need significance? Get it from Jesus as a son or daughter of God. There's nothing you can buy that comes close. Do you need security? Get it from Jesus as your Protector and Provider. There's nothing you can buy that will make you more secure. Do you need purpose? Get it from Jesus and join him in the kingdom work of restoring this planet and its peoples to God's shalom. There's nothing you can buy that will give you greater purpose.

TheMennonite

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Professionalism in music not appropriate
I appreciated the March 16 issue emphasis on music in the church; however, I am saddened by the emphasis of professionalism both in leading and in singing. While adequate skills are important to lead music, and all who worship should offer God their best, worship should not be a time of rehearsal or performance. Those who come with hearts full of love and offer God a joyful noise need not be reminded that their ear for harmony is not all it should be or be required to concentrate so much on singing properly that all the joy of worship is lost. I disagree with the statement by William Eash ("Tips for Song Leaders") that singing is a difficult and complex task. In a church worship setting it should be the opposite. I do not believe that offering ourselves to our God in worship requires "outstanding congregational singing," and as much as I love to hear good four-part singing, it is more important to me that all who come are welcomed to join in regardless of their musical abilities.—*Joyce Nussbaum, Apple Creek, Ohio*

Messiah complex
Glenn Lehman's suggestion that we pursue works other than *Messiah* ("Messiah Complex," March 16) is important, yet I would caution against creating unnecessary "issues" about the value of its ongoing widespread use. Although *Messiah* was conceived for the concert hall, it has "worked" in countless settings to gather, teach and inspire. My home congregation, Oak Grove Mennonite Church in Smithville, Ohio, has "rendered" Messiah 70 times since the 1930s. I remember the sense of awe I felt when learning it as an MYFer as well as a new bond with the adults who had been singing it for years. It is still my dream that our daughters can sometime soon experience singing *Messiah* at Oak Grove, perhaps even with their 80-something Grandpa, who is still singing it after all these years.—*Diane Schrock Hertzler, Goshen, Ind.*

Hate the sin, love the sinner
I am deeply sympathetic for Melissa Meserole's unfortunate outcome in her service on the Youth Evangelism Service team ("EMM Worker Wounded By Gunshot"). I definitely would like to see justice served upon the assailants. Remember we are to hate the action of crime but to love the criminal. The Bible teaches us as Mennonite Christians to hate sin but love the sinner. I pray for all parties: first for Melissa, that she can and will forgive, then for the attackers to come to repentance sincerely and to ask for forgiveness. I am a penitent Christian within prison walls. Though I, too, am forgiven, I still must endure the consequences until my last penny has been paid. Likewise, I pray that the Birmingham, Ala., authorities will capture these guys and let God deal with the outcome of this tragedy. May God richly bless Melissa and her family.—*Kevin Fannin, Meridian, Miss.*

The Passion
Re Gordon Houser's Mediaculture column ("*The Passion*: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly," March 16): What a "picky-picky" and malicious attack on Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*. Shouldn't we be ever so thankful to have this message come from Hollywood? Gibson bucked the movie establishment and put his money and efforts where his heart and convictions were. Who of us would stand so strong and long and have such a passion to tell the story of Christ's suffering to the world? —*Harold E. Franz, Wichita, Kan.*

I appreciated Houser' s discussion of *The Passion of the Christ*. I haven't seen the film, as it sounds too violent for me. But many people are talking about it. When I reflect on this film and other recent films with biblical themes that were produced for the theater, I believe God may be taking his message to the world again through the theater as he did with Handel's oratorios.

Some ask if God's Son suffered such cruelty to redeem the world why is there still so much evil and violence in the world? We should remember that the world, by rejecting Christ, chose Barabbas and his way of evil and violence.—*John F. Murray, Kouts, Ind.*

In answer to Houser's question, "But isn't it who Jesus is that saves us rather than only the bloody way he died?" There are many Scripture verses that speak of the blood and show the all-important place the blood has in our salvation and our walk in the Lord. We also have many old gospel songs. Sorry to say many of these songs are not in our songbooks anymore. Why?—*John E. Penner, Freeman, S.D.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Clair Weaver helps people make the transition back into society after they are released from prison (page 16). The article "Finding a Place" describes a Lebanon (Pa.) County ministry sponsored by six Mennonite congregations. Jubilee Ministries offers "food for the body and food for the soul." This is one more example of Mennonite congregations and individuals who demonstrate what it means to be a missional church. April 22 is Earth Day, and some congregations will mark April 25 as Earth Sunday. Esther Epp-Tiessen (page 8) shows how war destroys not only human life but God's good creation. Ruth Naylor offers a story (page 15) to help us think about generosity in time for Stewardship Sunday, which is May 2.—*Editor*

A passionate faith

I couldn't help but reflect on "A Passionate Faith" (Grace and Truth, March 16) while visiting a church today. I am the worshiper described by Donna Mast. Today I was prepared to give. I received blessings all week, and I wanted to worship, to think about the songs, to thank my God, to bow down before him and to reflect the reality that life is better with Jesus. But the first prayer today was addressing our needs. The second prayer was for all of the special needs in the congregation. The third prayer was how we could have hope as Christians, another about how we can be forgiven, and the closing prayer was a blessing for us during the week. I came away mixed up and disappointed.

What does God want from us in worship? More of our needs fulfilled? Or during this holy time, can we spare a few minutes from our requests and needs to address God in his holiness and truly worship who God is?—*Judy Miller, Orrville, Ohio*

Lord and Savior

Re Everett J. Thomas' editorial about Lord or Savior or both ("Lord *and* Savior," March 16): This is one of the defining issues for the Mennonite church of the future. It seems to me that a polarization takes place and we emphasize one aspect of salvation over the other.

Some voices in Mennonite Church USA are so afraid of being seen as Evangelical that to talk of a conversion or a time of invitation seems unnecessary or troublesome. Others are heavily influenced by the reductionism we see in certain Evangelical circles which boils salvation down to a neat package: Say this one prayer and you are in. The church is in grave trouble when discipleship is viewed as extracurricular or optional. The church is also in trouble when we strip the guts out of the gospel and do not call individuals to repentance and a personal relationship with Jesus. We as Anabaptists have been preaching this for many years. Let us stay true to the gospel.—*Chad Miller, Hartville, Ohio*

Slaves and ambassadors

Karl McKinney's cogent self-understanding and clear call to all of us in "Emissaries From Another Realm" (Grace and Truth, March 2) is to be commended. As he said, "When will the slave, the servant, the meek and the living sacrifice move from the margins and become norms for discipleship?" Indeed. May God bless all who work at it by the grace of God.—*Milo D. Stahl, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Tuning the piano

As a registered piano technician, I was disappointed to see that "Tuning the Piano" (March 16) turned out to be a poem. Sorry, Jean Janzen. Pianos have been a part of my life as long as I can remember. I began tuning pianos part-time while teaching music at Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School. This is now my full-time occupation. My "patients" are varied: expensive Steinways to el cheapo spinets, well-maintained to neglected for decades. Some can be made to sound almost worthy of heaven, while others can only be made to sound less terrible. Sometimes they even seem to have personalities. "Thank you, thank you, thank you! I've been waiting for you for years!" or, "You touch me and I'm gonna break a string!" I always have Band-Aids with me.

I consider it a special privilege to work on a church piano. While tuning I am all alone, but I know that, come Sunday morning, the instrument will be used for the praise and worship of God. Most worshipers will never know that I've been there, but it is one way I can contribute to the work of the kingdom.—*Clyde Hollinger, Lititz, Pa.*

Mennonite policeman is pacifist

As a member of the law enforcement profession and a Mennonite, I take exception to Dan Lais' letter (Readers Say, March 16). Two points that Lais makes are erroneous. First, Lais makes a statement about the officers featured in the Jan. 20 article, "Police Officers Consider Peace Role, Beliefs," as police officers wanting to be Mennonite. As I read the article, those officers are Mennonite, not Mennonite wannabes. Lais also says, "If one looks closely at the law-enforcement people of U.S. downtowns, one will see that lethal force is prominently displayed as an option."

Lethal force is, and always will be, the last and final option in law enforcement. As a law enforcement officer, one is trained to use a force continuum: force by an officer escalates only when confronted with escalating force from the accused, and that force is in direct proportion to the force encountered. It is a sad moment when lethal force must be used—a moment made even worse by exaggeration and misinformation about such occurrences in the media. (The media always fail to mention that most police officers will never draw their gun in the line of duty during their career.)

I am a proud Mennonite. I strongly believe in the peace practices of our church. I oppose the war and subversive activities that our country continues to undertake around the world. But I am also proud of my profession. I am proud to place my life on the line to keep not only my fellow Mennonites but all members of my community safe. I am proud that God has seen in me the ability to accomplish this for my fellow man. I am proud to be a *peace* officer.—*Gregg Rosenbery, Haslett, Mich.*

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. —*Editors*

IN BRIEF

2 TONS OF TOMATOES = $50 PAY = UNFAIR TRADE

NCC photo

Tons of tomatoes

Two tons of tomatoes, enough to fill all the tubs in this photo is what a Florida farm worker would have to pick to make just $50. The world's largest fast-food chain, Yum! Brands, buys those tomatoes for its Taco Bell outlets and presses its suppliers for this rock-bottom price. But if Yum! paid just one cent more per pound, the wages of each of these laborers would double and give a family a fair chance at a decent life.—*National Council of Churches*

Peace books for public schools

Kaufman Mennonite Church, Davidsville, Pa., has donated eight books about conflict resolution to the Conemaugh Township Area Schools. Children from the church and school attended an open house on March 25. The peace and justice committee of the church presented a skit and activity taken from the donated books, dealing with the theme "Catch the Spirit of Kindness." The books vary from curriculum guides to stories for children, and will be available to students and teachers in the school district's three libraries.—*Lynette Kauffman Plank*

New York to join Mennonite Church USA

SENECA FALLS, N.Y.—New York Mennonite Conference delegates on April 3 came to a unanimous consensus to join Mennonite Church USA as a full member.

"We began discussing full membership and it took off on a life of its own," said LeRoy J. Mast, conference moderator and pastor of Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church, Hammondsport. At least 13 of the conference's 16 congregations needed to support the decision to make it binding. The executive council wanted consensus rather than voting. But voting was the last thing on anyone's mind by the end of the day.—*Laurie L. Oswald*

Congolese ordain development minister

STRASBOURG, France—The Congolese Mennonite Brethren Church has taken the unusual step of ordaining a minister to work in economic development.

The conference ordained Mama Kadi to a special ministry of spiritual formation and economic development among pastors' wives. She will help women in the conference establish small businesses and work toward equitable distribution of resources among Congolese men and women.

To elevate economic assistance to the level of recognized ministry is unusual, although Mama Kadi is not the first Congolese Mennonite Brethren woman to be ordained.

The Congolese church ordained Madame Charly Lukala Londa in 2000 to pastor a congregation in France where she was studying.—*Mennonite World Conference*

Canadians protest missile defense systems

WINNIPEG—Twenty Canadian church leaders, including Mennonite Church Canada moderator Henry Krause, have spoken out against ballistic missile defense, or BMD, systems.

In a March 15 letter sent by the Canadian Council of Churches to Prime Minister Paul Martin, church leaders said proposed security solutions like BMD "can never satisfy the deep human yearning for immunity from nuclear terror … [and] fail to counter the nuclear threat and precipitate further insecurities."

The United States has been researching BMD technology since the 1940s. A Canadian government Web site states that officials are "examining possible Canadian participation" in a BMD program.

Mennonite youth quiz off on Exodus

The Pleasant View (Wayne County, Ohio) quiz team celebrates a come-from-behind win in the Exodus 2004 Invitational Bible Quiz Tournament held March 27-28 in Pettisville, Ohio. More than 600 quizzers on 87 Bible quiz teams from five Mennonite areas in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia participated in the tournament.

Service with a smile

From left, Danielle Martin, Abbey Basom and Amanda Forte, students at Locust Grove Mennonite School, Lancaster, Pa., organize toys at TLC, formerly Harb-Adult, during the school's annual service day on March 26.

Missile defense is one of the largest governmental research and development programs in the United States, with a budget of about $9 billion in 2004.—*Mennonite Church Canada News Service*

Winning essay calls for consistent pro-life

WASHINGTON—An essay by a Goshen, Ind., high-school senior calling for a consistent pro-life position took top honors in the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office Public Policy Essay and Speech Contest.

A first-place prize of $500 went to Kelly Shenk, a senior at Bethany Christian School, for her essay on "A Pro-Life Philosophy."

Honorable mentions were awarded to Erin Brandeberry of Goshen, also a senior at Bethany, and Beth Kaufman, a senior at Freeman (S.D.) Academy. Each will receive $50.

Brandeberry's topic was "Energy: The Big Switch," on the importance of developing alternative energy sources. Kaufman wrote on "Justice for All," discussing alternative ways to deal with domestic and international criminal behavior. —*Mennonite Central Committee News Service*

Mennonite Camping Association meets

LINCOLN CITY, Ore.—Representatives from Mennonite camps and retreat centers across Canada and the United States attended Mennonite Camping Association's binational convention March 22-25 at Drift Creek Camp.

Larry and Mary Jane Eby have been commissioned to write the historical sequel to Jess Kauffman's *A Vision and a Legacy: The Story of Mennonite Camping, 1920-80.—MCA*

Mennonites and Orthodox converse

READING, Pa.—More than 50 Mennonite and Orthodox clergy and laypeople met March 5-6 in Reading for "Traveling the Tradition: An Orthodox-Mennonite Conversation."

Orthodox priest Father Joseph Gibson described his search for meaning through agnosticism, Eastern religions and charismatic Christianity and culminating in coming to Orthodoxy. He pointed out that the Bible is "an Eastern book" and that the "founding communities of faith were Eastern."

Roy Hange, a Mennonite pastor from Charlottesville, Va., and former Mennonite Central Committee worker in the Middle East, said that Orthodoxy gives a broader sense "that Jesus is more than somebody who just saved me from my sin, that overwhelming presence of the Spirit as being in our midst, as working through the body of Christ in the community to call us toward a closer relationship."

Father Demetrius of Reading expressed a desire to learn from Mennonites' ability to work for social justice.

Ray Reitz, a Mennonite pastor from the Lancaster, Pa., area, said, "This [meeting] exceeded our wildest expectations."—*Kenton Glick*

CPT names new co-directors

CHICAGO—Christian Peacemaker Teams has named Doug Pritchard and Carol Rose its new co-directors, effective Sept. 1, following the resignation of Gene Stoltzfus, who has been CPT's director for 16 years.

Rose

Pritchard

Rose, 44, of Wichita, Kan., in February completed six years as pastor of Mennonite Church of the Servant in Wichita. She worked 13 years with Mennonite Central Committee in Honduras, Thailand, the Philippines and Lancaster, Pa. Rose has taught the biblical and theological basis for nonviolence at the last four CPT trainings.

Pritchard, 55, of Toronto, has been coordinator of CPT Canada since that program began in 1997. He has overseen the recruitment, training and placement of CPT workers and developed a strong financial and prayer support base for CPT with churches and individuals. He is a member of Toronto United Mennonite Church.—*CPT*

IN BRIEF

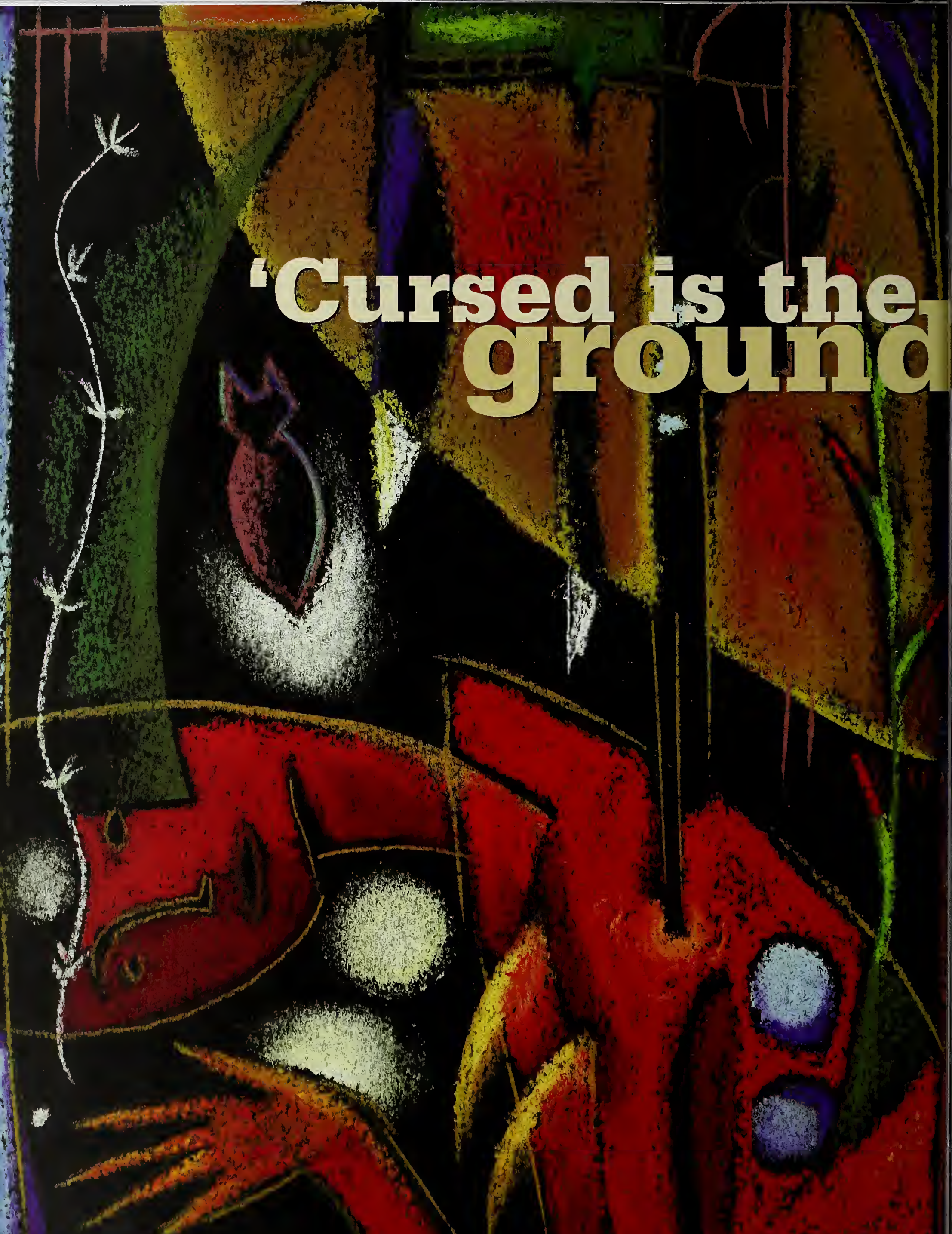
Canadian Mennonite names new editor

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service, which publishes *Canadian Mennonite*, has named Timothy Dyck editor-publisher, effective Aug. 1. He is completing a year of studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. He is a member of Waterloo (Ont.) North Mennonite Church.—*Canadian Mennonite*

Credit union in top 100

Mennonite Financial, a credit union serving Mennonites and members of related Anabaptist groups in the United States, has been recognized as one of the top 100 credit unions in the country for savings growth in 2003 (18 percent). It also received a "best in class" for its loans-to-savings ratio (101 percent) and its loan growth (21 percent). The honors come from Callahan and Associates, an independent credit union monitoring organization in Washington. President Larry D. Miller noted that Mennonite Financial has almost doubled its asset size since it was formed from the merger of three Mennonite credit unions in October 2000, from $28 million to $51 million.

'Cursed is the ground



War and God's creation

by Esther Epp-Tiessen

because of you'

The story of God's creation of the world describes a garden of beauty and abundance. The man and the woman live at peace with each other and with God in the midst of this garden. When they sin, they are driven from the garden into an inhospitable land. Because of their sin, God says, "Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field" (Genesis 3:17b-18).

Later, Cain kills his brother Abel. In response to this act of violence, God demands to know of Cain, "What have you done? Listen; the voice of your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground! And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it will no longer yield to you its strength" (Genesis 4:10b-12a).

These stories point to a connection between peace and the state of the earth. God brings forth a wondrous creation and places humankind in its midst. Where people live in harmony with God's intention and in peace with each other, the beauty and abundance of the garden is preserved. Where there is violence and sin, the land is cursed and in turn curses. God's entire creation suffers.

Where people live in harmony with God's intention and in peace with each other, the beauty and abundance of the garden is preserved.

War harms the earth. The sin of war and violent conflict is one of the preeminent ways humankind contributes to "cursing" God's creation. In our time, war is one of the most ecologically destructive of all human activities. Warfare pollutes air and water, erodes soil, denudes forests, destroys natural habitats, kills wildlife. Mass movements of refugees seeking to escape war in turn impose undue pressure on the land and its resources. The collateral

Continued on page 10

In our time, war is one of the most ecologically destructive of all human activities. The collateral damage of warfare to the environment is colossal.

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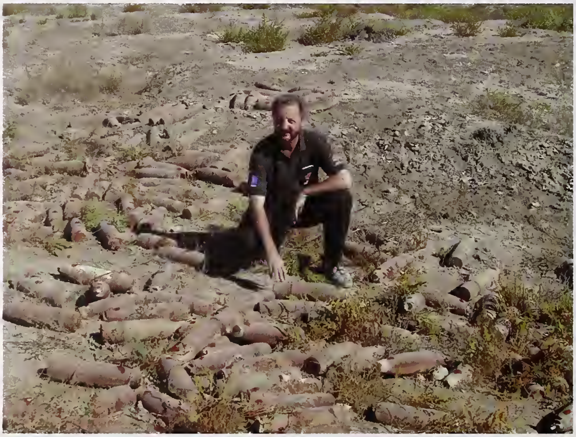
damage of warfare to the environment is colossal. Here are just a few examples.

During the Vietnam War, the U.S. military used a potent herbicide called Agent Orange to denude forests and thereby make it more difficult for Viet Cong guerrillas to take cover in the jungle. Besides creating severe health problems for the human population, about 40 percent of Vietnam's forest was destroyed, some of it permanently.

In El Salvador the Armed Forces used a similar strategy to crush a rebel insurgency during the 1980s. Intended to weaken the rebels' rural support base, the "scorched earth policy" destroyed forests and agricultural lands. In only one year, 1984-85, a total of 2.8 million tons of bombs were dropped, turning huge areas into virtual wastelands.[1]



MCC photo

War harms: Mennonite Central Committee worker Dave Pankratz, Winnipeg, among the explosive remnants of war left over from the Iran-Iraq war. These have been sitting there for almost 15 years. Children have been warned to avoid them for that whole time. The copper has been removed from them to sell on the market.

During the Gulf War of 1991, oil tankers and oil production sites were primary targets for both U.S.-led and Iraqi forces. About 10 million barrels of crude oil were either spilled into the Persian Gulf waters or turned into toxic airborne fumes. Some 30,000 marine birds were killed, 20 percent of mangrove swamps contaminated and 50 percent of coral reefs affected.[2] Additionally, missiles coated with depleted uranium disbursed tons of radioactive dust through the atmosphere. The impact of this environmental disaster on the human health of Iraqi people is showing itself through dramatic increases in cancers and birth defects; the long-term impact on soil, animals and groundwater is yet unknown.[3]

Landmines and cluster bombies are among the cheapest and smallest of conventional weapons, but their impact on the earth is also devastating. Besides the toll they take on human life, often long after wars have officially ended, they contribute to environmental destruction by rendering farmland inaccessible. Small farmers often have few choices but to try farming elsewhere, thereby contributing to deforestation and the degradation of already fragile lands.

Conventional warfare has always been destructive to the environment. Weapons of mass destruction—whether nuclear, chemical or biological—are so devastating that they threaten the survival of the earth as we know it.

Environmental scarcities and disparities contribute to war. Environmental scarcity or disparities in access to environmental resources also contribute to conflict and warfare, particularly where other issues are involved.

The dispute between Israelis and Palestinians is a complex one, with many issues contributing to the armed conflict that has gone on for decades. A significant environmental factor is water scarcity. About a quarter of the water use by the State of Israel originates in the occupied territories (West Bank and Gaza). Much of this water goes to support Israeli settlers living in illegal settlements in the territories. While Israel restricts their use of water, settlers still consume about four times as much as Palestinians. Authorities conclude that water scarcity and the resulting economic impact has contributed to the Palestinian uprising against Israel.[4]

The 1994 genocide in Rwanda usually has been portrayed by the Western media as an ethnic conflict between Hutus and Tutsis. But analysts argue that ecological scarcities, compounded by the structures of international trade, were much more significant factors.[5] Rapid population growth after independence, plus rapid transformation of pasture into agricultural land for the production of export crops (primarily coffee), put undue pressure on the soil. As land became scarcer and more degraded, poverty deepened. When the price of coffee plummeted in the early 1990s, resentments over inequi-

Peacemaking should not only be about transforming conflict within the human community. It must also include care for the earth and just access to the earth's resources.

ties were ripe for exploitation by political factions.

Many analysts suggest that the growth of terrorist groups, particularly those that target Western interests, are rooted in resentment over unequal access to the earth's resources. They argue that oppressed peoples around the world are aware that laws governing financial assistance and global trade benefit those already wealthy. They see their own agricultural land, forests and fishing grounds being depleted to meet Western demands. They see their own water resources coming under the control of private, foreign-owned corporations. They regard the current "war on terrorism" as being not about democracy and freedom but about America securing control over Middle Eastern oil.[6]

Environmental degradation and conflicts over access to environmental resources are important causes of violent human conflicts both within and between states. A former director of the United Nations Environment Program put it this way: "The ultimate choice is between conservation or conflict. Trees now or tanks later."[7]

Peacemaking and earthkeeping go hand in hand. As people fight wars, they harm God's creation in untold ways. Moreover, as they exploit God's creation, particularly when they use more than their fair share, they contribute to the conditions that fuel conflict and—in some instances—war. A vicious cycle is set in process. Human violence and ecological destruction feed each other, and the land is cursed.

Christian peacemaking and caring for God's good creation must go hand in hand. Peacemaking should not only be about transforming conflict within the human community. It must also include care for the earth and just access to the earth's resources.

The apostle Paul promises that in God's good time God will bring healing to a broken creation (Romans 8:19-20). Human sin and violence and the curse it casts upon the land will be overcome. In the meantime, Christian peacemakers are called to live in ways that anticipate and participate in that healing.

Esther Epp-Tiessen is a member of Charleswood Mennonite Church in Winnipeg and serves as coordinator for the peace ministries program of Mennonite Central Committee Canada. Canadian Mennonite *published an abbreviated version of this article in January.*

'7 Days'—It is still good

An Earth-care trek for Christians

Christians are invited to join "7 Days," a nine-month Web-based Earth-care trek that links faith and environmental concern. "7 Days" is intended to encourage and empower participants to care for God's good creation by living more sustainable lives.

"7 Days" is found at http://www.mcc.org/7days. The site features:

- information about current environmental issues,
- discussion of Christian foundations for ecological justice,
- material for reflection and worship,
- suggestions for taking action in individual and community settings,
- interactive discussions
- and contributions from other "7 Days" participants.

The "7 Days" trek is divided into monthly topics roughly corresponding to the days of creation in Genesis 1 and featuring weekly updates. The trek may be taken by individuals or groups. Those interested are invited to register on the Web site, which will allow them to receive regular notices when the contents of the Web site have been updated and to join the extended community of people traveling on the same trek.

"7 Days" is an initiative of the peace ministries program of Mennonite Central Committee Canada and is coordinated by Joanne Moyer. Joanne brings to the project a combined background in environmental studies and theology, plus a strong personal connection to creation.

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[1] Eric Fast, "War's Impact on the Environment: El Salvador as a Case Study," paper for Mennonite Central Committee Canada Peace Ministries, 2002. http://www.mcc.org/canada/peace/environment_elsalvador.html

[2] Will Hart, "Collateral Damage: The Impact of War on the Environment," http://www.commonsentience.com/collateral.html

[3] See Akira Tashiro, *Discounted Casualties: The Human Cost of Depleted Uranium* (Hiroshima: The Chugoku Shimbun, 2001). See also the works of Dr. Douglas Rokke, former health physicist and director of the U.S. Army Depleted Uranium Project.

[4] Thomas Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases," International Security,19:1 (Summer 1994), 5-40. http://www.library.utoronto.ca/pcs/evidence/evid1.htm

[5] Valerie Percival and Thomas Homer-Dixon," Environmental Scarcities and Violence Conflict: The Case of Rwanda," Occasional Paper, 1995, American Association for the Advancement of Science and the University of Toronto. http://www.library.utoronto.ca/pcs/eps/rwanda/rwanda1.htm

[6] See for example, the writing of Anup Shah, a U.S.-trained Indian living in England, at http://www.globalissues.org/Geopolitics/MiddleEast.asp

[7] Quoted in Art and Jocele Meyer, *Earthkeepers: Environmental Perspectives on Hunger, Poverty and Injustice* (Herald Press, 1991), p. 141.

Getting angry with God

The Psalms teach us to freely express our feelings to God.

by Ken Gibble

There are some things in the Bible that make me shudder. Case in point: Psalm 88. One Old Testament scholar has called Psalm 88 “an embarrassment to conventional faith.” He writes: “It is the cry of a believer … whose life has gone awry, who desperately seeks contact with [God], but who is unable to evoke a response. This is indeed ‘the dark night of the soul’ ”(Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms*).

Here is just a portion of Psalm 88 (vv. 1-2, 4-8a, 14).

“O LORD, God of my salvation, when, at night, I cry out in your presence,
let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry.
… I am counted among those who go down to the Pit;
I am like those who have no help,
like those forsaken among the dead,
like the slain that lie in the grave,
like those whom you remember no more, for they are cut off from your hand.
You have put me in the depths of the Pit,
in the regions dark and deep.
Your wrath lies heavy upon me,
and you overwhelm me with all your waves.
You have caused my companions to shun me;
you have made me a thing of horror to them.
… O LORD, why do you cast me off?
Why do you hide your face from me?”

Angry psalm: The tone of this psalm is unrelentingly dark and desperate. Even more, the psalmist accuses God of being the cause of it all: “You have put me in the depths of the Pit, in the regions dark and deep. You have caused my companions to shun me; you have made me a thing of horror to them.” This is an angry psalm, and the anger is directed at God. There is not a single word of praise to be found here.

How did such an outpouring of despair and anger make it into the pages of Holy Scripture?

I’ll never forget how surprised I was when I first realized this kind of language was in the Bible. I was in high school and had decided to read through the Psalms. I’m not sure who or what prompted me to do that, but I could hardly believe what I was reading. I had no idea the writers of Scripture expressed such doubt, such anger—anger at God, no less. I remember thinking, What a relief! How refreshing to discover such honesty. If it was OK for whoever wrote the Psalms to express their doubts, their anger, to God, then surely it was OK for me to do the same. Reading the angry psalms was liberating for me at that point in my faith pilgrimage. When I got angry at God or doubted God’s love or even God’s existence, it was all right. God could handle my doubts, my rage.

I still believe that. I think it is a mistake for Christians to suppose that faith is always a matter of being cheerful and upbeat. Where did we ever get this idea that God wants us to be happy all the time? Maybe we breathed it in from the messages in our culture, in a North America that has been described as “the officially optimistic society” (Douglas John Hall, *Lighten Our Darkness*).

Ours is the great love affair with “success,” defined usually in terms of growth—a rising stock market, more material goods. This definition of success has infected even the church of Jesus Christ

Where did we ever get this idea that God wants us to be happy all the time?

with "successful" churches being those with more members, programs or money than surrounding churches. This is strange when we remember who Jesus was and what he told his disciples: "Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:43b-45).

God desires from us our entire selves, just as we are. We don't have to come to God with the masks we so often wear for the benefit of others. "How are you doing?" "Oh, fine." And often we are fine. But sometimes we aren't. Sometimes our lives are filled to the brim with worry or pain or anger or despair. God welcomes whatever feelings we have. The great commandment, Jesus said, is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. Not just with the good stuff in your heart, soul and mind. Love God with everything you have. Love God with the best in you, and love God with the worst in you.

Goodness: That's not easy to do. We have been conditioned to be good, to think good thoughts and do good things, especially when we imagine God is watching or listening. The writer Madeleine L'Engle says that when she was a little girl she ended her prayers with, "and God bless me and make me a good girl." Now, looking back, she says, "I become less and less sure that it was a good prayer." Now she understands that goodness is what God can do in us, not something we can accomplish by an act of will. She writes, "If I am ever good, it is not because I am trying to be but because goodness is for a moment offered me as a gift of sheer grace" (*A Stone for a Pillow*).

How freeing it is to come to the prayer book of the Bible, the Psalms, and find there both great joy and great despair. Some of the Psalms express a desire for revenge on enemies. Psalm 109 contains a string of curses directed at those who, the psalmist says, "attack me without cause." "He loved to curse," is the accusation, therefore "let curses come on him!" "Let there be none to extend kindness to him, nor any to pity his fatherless children!" On and on goes this chilling set of curses. And again we ask, What is stuff like this doing in the Bible?

Again, the answer is honesty. The psalmist is being ruthlessly honest to God about feelings of rage. Let's face it, you and I can get angry about the way others have treated us. People we count on offend us or betray us. Sometimes we're afraid to acknowledge our anger or rage to God because such feelings aren't, well, nice.

The psalmist suffers from no such misgivings. The longing to have the wrongdoer suffer is poured out to God with a vengeance. But notice that the psalmist does not exact revenge. Instead the feelings are given to God because there is a trust that God will know what to do and will do what is just. What a healthy kind of faith this is. Sometimes just naming our anger and giving it to God may be just the right therapy for our anger.

Often we think our prayers should contain the right words. We wrap ourselves in a cloak of religious piety and goodness, when what we may be feeling is the opposite. In fact, praise of God that is genuine comes from the depths of our being, and in those depths there is always a measure of suffering, of pain.

When I read the prayers in the Psalms, I am comforted in knowing that prayers from the heart are not just OK but are welcomed by the Holy Shepherd who longs to lead me by still waters.

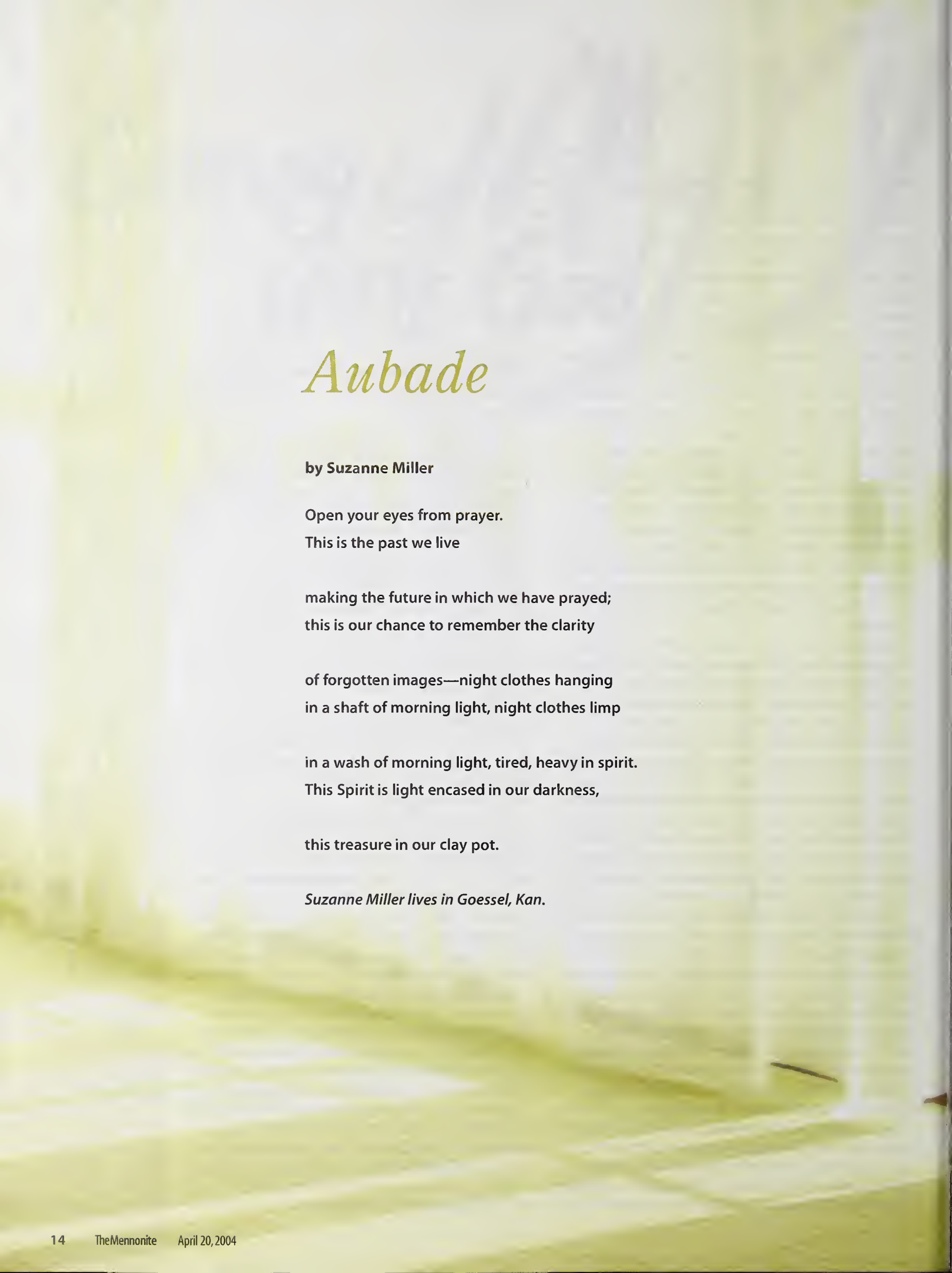
God knows that situations arise in our lives for which there are no clear answers. Why am I feeling so depressed? Why did my loved one have to die? When we hear someone express such questions, you and I are tempted to answer with an explanation or a word of encouragement. But that is probably not the best response. Sometimes the best we can do is to point to a psalm like Psalm 88: "My soul is full to troubles."

And the final word is not the reality of suffering. In the words of Psalm 30: "Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning." When that morning comes and exactly what it will look like, you and I cannot say. At best, we have clues to it from our faith, from the Scriptures: clues such as an empty tomb, a risen Lord preparing breakfast for his friends, John's vision of "a new heaven and a new earth," God wiping every tear from our eyes.

And even though Psalm 88 ends on a somber note, with the psalmist unable to give voice to praise, it is hard to miss what follows. These are the opening words of Psalm 89: "I will sing of your steadfast love, O LORD, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations."

That can be our song, too, a song of God's steadfast love, a love that will not let us go, no matter how long and winding the road, no matter how dark the shadows in the valley, no matter what.

Ken Gibble lives in Greencastle, Pa.



Aubade

by Suzanne Miller

Open your eyes from prayer.
This is the past we live

making the future in which we have prayed;
this is our chance to remember the clarity

of forgotten images—night clothes hanging
in a shaft of morning light, night clothes limp

in a wash of morning light, tired, heavy in spirit.
This Spirit is light encased in our darkness,

this treasure in our clay pot.

Suzanne Miller lives in Goessel, Kan.

Something more

A lesson in generosity

by Ruth Naylor

Every once in awhile something happens that makes my heart beat a little lighter and brings inspiration to the average day. Such was the case today.

While I was serving on the pastoral staff at our church, I took a training course in spiritual guidance. In retirement I've continued to offer spiritual direction to those who want to deepen their sense of God's presence and direction in their lives. Today a pastor from another denomination in a nearby city was ready to leave my home. Our hour together was finished, and she was looking through her purse. "I seem to have forgotten my checkbook," she said.

"That's OK," I said. "You remember that I don't charge anyway. Anything you ever leave for me is purely gift. Just forget it this time."

She ignored my offer and sorted through the cash in her billfold. Slightly flustered, she said, "Without my check record, I can't even remember how much I usually pay you."

Trying to put her at ease, I told her she usually leaves me $35, but now I was embarrassed as well. "Just let it go," I said. "You are an inspiration to me, and I'm happy you find benefit in coming."

"I don't have the right change," she said as she laid a $20 bill and a $10 bill on the end table beside her. "I'll leave this for you now and then next time I'll give you more."

We hugged and she left. I blew out the Christlight candle, picked up the money, straightened the cushions on the couch and picked up our two teacups to return them to the kitchen. As I was rinsing them at the sink, the doorbell rang.

This attractive young pastor, in her early 30s, still a bit ruffled, was smiling. "Without telling you the whole story behind this," she said, "I want to pay you more rather than less." She pushed another bill into my hand, her eyes reflecting the joy of acting on spiritual impulse.

Glancing down, I saw that it was another $20. I was speechless but also curious. Although she needed to be on her way, she agreed to explain briefly. "It is budget planning time in our church," she said, "and in last Sunday's sermon, our lead pastor shared a recent experience that is related to support of kingdom work."

This is the story she told me:

An unchurched man in the community had called First Church* to see if he could consult with Rev. Smith* about a personal family matter that was troubling him. The church secretary made the necessary arrangements, and at the appointed time a well-dressed gentleman appeared.

Behind closed doors, the pastor and his visitor talked for a long time. When the conversation seemed to be winding down, this successful businessman turned to the pastor and in a magnanimous voice said, "Rev. Smith, I really appreciate the time you've given me this afternoon. You've helped me a lot." His voice brightened as he continued, "I'd like to make a contribution to your church if I may."

Rev. Smith was more than willing to accept his gift. It was obvious the man was well-to-do, and the finance committee would be more than happy to channel the money into some worthwhile kingdom project.

The businessman reached for his billfold and pulled out a $20 bill. "Have you got change for a twenty?" he asked. Taken aback, the pastor felt for his billfold, only to find that he'd left it at home.

"That's all right," the businessman assured him. "I'll drop something off later in the week."

A few days later, when the pastor returned from lunch, his secretary said the man had just been in to leave a contribution in appreciation for the time the pastor had spent with him. On his desk, the pastor found an envelope containing a $10 bill.

My pastor friend chuckled and said, "So now you know why I want to give you more rather than less."

We hugged again. I thanked her for the story and for the unexpected gift. She went back to her car, and I went back into the kitchen, knowing I was feeling a new burst of generosity myself. I know that in the days ahead there will be unexpected opportunities to pass on that feeling of goodwill that comes with generous kingdom giving.

In the days ahead there will be unexpected opportunities to pass on that feeling of goodwill that comes with generous kingdom giving.

May 2 is Stewardship Sunday.

Ruth Naylor is a member of First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio.

* Names in this true story are fictitious.

Finding a place

Jubilee Ministries offers food for body and soul.

by Laurie L. Oswald

Lebanon County, Pa., his boyhood home, is the last place Clair Weaver thought he wanted to live as an adult. But it's the very place he feels most at home in following God's call for his life.

Hearing that call to "come home" many years ago was difficult for Clair, now executive director of Jubilee Ministries. Some congregations belonging to the Lebanon District of Lancaster Mennonite Conference sponsor the ministry that reaches out to people in and around Lebanon Valley. Many of these people have been involved with the prison system and have needs related to their transition back into community life.

Laurie L. Oswald

Reaching hearts: Clair Weaver with Betsy, his wife.

Clair, who loved being a respiratory technician, wanted to pursue the medical field further. But God steered him in another direction. So when people asked him to become executive director at Jubilee 14 years ago, he gave up his professional love to reach out in love to disenfranchised people: troubled youth, prison inmates, people addicted to drugs and alcohol, those who can't make ends meet financially and those transitioning from prisons into the community.

"After I left Lebanon County as a young man and went into Mennonite Voluntary Service in Florida, I thought I'd never come back to this area," says Clair, who was pastor at Lebanon Christian Fellowship, one of six Jubilee-sponsoring congregations that grew from people coming out of prison. "I just felt I had changed too much to fit here anymore.

"But then the parents of Betsy, my wife, needed us back in the area, so we came home to Pennsylvania and settled in Pottsville for a time, then Hershey, where I worked in local hospitals. We later moved to Lebanon, where I did home-care respiratory therapy for the Good Samaritan Hospital, after which my boss and I started our own medical supply business."

But increasing struggles with Medicare costs and competition caused them to sell the business. While being pastor, Clair did some part-time work in a doctor's office and part-time administration at Jubilee before he became the full-time executive director in 1990.

"My life is shaped like a funnel, where God just kept narrowing my options until I ended up at Jubilee full-time," he says. "My people within the congregation helped me make one of the toughest decisions of my life. I really loved the medical field, but after praying and talking this out with friends, I knew Jubilee was where God wanted me."

Struggler helps other strugglers. Struggling to find his place in life has shaped Clair into a man who can help others find their place, too. For example, he works with Howard Melton. A participant in Jubilee's after-care program to transition people back into the community after incarceration, Howard lives at Jubilee House and works at the used-clothing and furniture store. Part of the year-long after-care includes working in one of the Jubilee's used clothing and furniture stores or at a construction site.

"I'm really nervous about getting back into the world, but working here, under the good care of a supervisor, is helping me relax," Howard says. "It's really hard to get back into the regular routine of life, after all the drama I've had in my life.

"I left my family and drank day and night for years and years. As it got worse and worse, I met people from the Jubilee prison ministry who helped me to see that God could forgive me. They also helped me read the Bible and to learn to know Jesus Christ.

"After I got out of the Marines, I'd been in 15 to 18 programs to help me with my alcohol problem. But Jubilee and Jesus are the first ones who really helped me. This place is special. It's not just a program. They really care about people here, about your personal relationship with God and your relationships with others. They don't want to fix your life. They want to offer you Jesus."

Jubilee ministries are fruit on the vine of Jesus. Caring about all aspects of Howard's life and the lives of others is the driving motive behind Jubilee, Clair says. Jubilee believes its food, clothing and shelter ministries are "fruits on the vine" of the life of Jesus Christ, which is the reason Jubilee exists, he says. Jubilee strikes a balance between offering food for the body and food for the soul.

The after-care program in which Howard participates is part of Jubilee's community ministries, which primarily serve those related to the criminal justice system. This branch of ministry provides pastoral counseling to hurting and seeking people, material assistance, a craft group for women, Faith House—a temporary shelter for families owned by Lebanon Church of the Brethren and operated by Jubilee—and a summer camp for children whose parents are in prison or on parole.

Jubilee also supplies several chaplains for the region's state prisons and trains volunteers to visit the prisons and share God's love through worship, Bible studies, mentoring, discipleship classes, stress and anger management and counseling, he says.

"We found that many of the chaplains assigned in these prisons were more concerned with politics than with inmates' souls," Clair says. "We send chaplains into these facilities who care about the inmates as people and who have the ability to share Jesus."

And Jubilee offers low-cost clothing and furniture items in its stores, and a Christian coffeehouse, Café Beracah, in downtown Lebanon that helps prevent a life of crime for youth and adults.

The Jubilee used clothing and furniture stores in Lebanon and Palmyra help support about 46 percent—or about $450,000—of yearly operating costs for Jubilee ministries. The total budget has grown from about $100,000 15 years ago to about $1.2 million in 2003.

Other sources of support—in donations and volunteers—include seven Lancaster Conference congregations: Lebanon Christian Fellowship, Gringrichs Mennonite Church, Krall Mennonite Church and Freedom in Christ Fellowship (a church plant reaching out to young people at the café) in Lebanon; Meckville Mennonite Church and Schubert Mennonite Church in Bethel; and Roedersville Mennonite Church in Pine Grove.

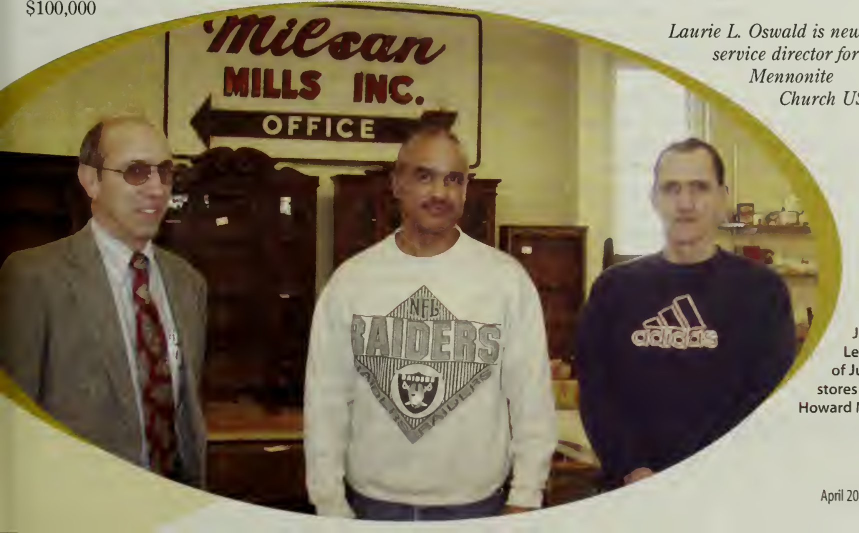
Volunteers from these congregations and other groups desire to reach people's hearts with Jesus—the most important source of life and goodness that Jubilee offers, Clair says.

It's not just a program. They really care about people here, about your personal relationship with God and your relationships with others. —Howard Melton

"The biggest challenge is reaching people's hearts so that they truly know Jesus," Clair says. "We have discovered that in teaching about Jesus, only about 10 percent of the people in prison make a firm commitment and stick with it for the long haul.

"On the flip side of that, our biggest joy is when someone really commits himself or herself to Jesus. There's a guy who for 40 years was an alcoholic and a drug abuser. Just recently a light bulb went on in him about God's love. And he came in to see me; [he was] just glowing. I knew he'd had an experience with God."

Laurie L. Oswald is news service director for Mennonite Church USA.



'Fruits on the vine': From left, Clair Weaver, executive director of Jubilee Ministries in Lebanon, Pa., works at one of Jubilee's used furniture stores with Carlos Barrero and Howard Melton.

Goin' to Carolina in my mind

Jorge Vallejos is director of the Executive Board Office of Convention Planning for Mennonite Church USA.

You have probably read by now that the next biennial assembly of Mennonite Church USA will be held in Charlotte, N.C., July 4-9, 2005. You have probably heard that Mennonite Church Canada will also meet with us in Charlotte. This will be the first time for our churches to come together since the integration of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC). Charlotte will offer an excellent opportunity to reconnect with friends and family.

People have asked me which came first, the decision to meet jointly or the selection of the meeting location. The answer is simple: neither. We had originally planned to meet in Canada. In fact, Canadians recommended that our office contact Toronto and Montreal, both wonderful cities with enough meeting space and hotel rooms to accommodate a group our size. We were also seriously considering the possibility, had Toronto been chosen, of offering billeting in the Kitchener-Waterloo area for anyone willing to make the 90-minute car ride each way every day.

What happened? We hit a snag. July is a busy month for hotels in Toronto and Montreal, with many tourists and other groups wanting meeting space. Hotels were not willing to give us the rates we normally get in the United States. This is how hotels figured it: Why should we give Mennonites an $80 U.S. rate when someone off the street is willing to walk in and pay us more than $100 U.S. for the room? It was my sad duty to recommend to the Joint Executive Committee, the group working on the 2005 convention, that we reconsider meeting in those cities.

We could have made a sacrifice and paid the much higher rate in order to meet in Canada. But at least two big issues worked against us. First, in late 2002 and early 2003 the United States was in a recession and cost was a huge concern for everyone. Second, and not necessarily the most important but the one with the greatest long-term effect on our meetings, was that once the word was out that our group had paid more than $100 for a room it would have been difficult to convince future cities that we were not able to pay a higher room rate. There were other, nonmonetary considerations for this decision, but they are beyond the scope of this article.

Just for your information, the average hotel rate in Charlotte will be $5 lower in 2005 than it was in Atlanta in 2003.

Although the number of Canadian youth and delegates coming to Charlotte won't have a huge impact on our overall numbers, the symbolic value of meeting together is huge. U.S and Canadian delegates will spend time dealing with joint agenda and will come together for all worship sessions. The rest of the time will be spent on country-specific agenda. The committees working with our office to put all this together have Canadian representation on them.

It will be good to watch friends and family reconnect in an assembly setting.

Speaking of committees, our first planning meeting for Charlotte was held in January, and we have a creative bunch. After three days of hard work, the group came up with the theme "Can't Keep Quiet," based on Acts 4:20. Before deciding to go forward with this theme, we looked at past convention themes for the former GC and MC denominations to be sure we were not recycling an old theme. We found that in the last 30 years this type of theme had not been considered by either group. One of the committee members wrote: "The convention planning committee embraces the story of the disciples in Acts 4:1-31 as having a message for the Mennonite Church today. We commend this entire text to the worship planning committees. It challenges us to speak the good news, to pray for boldness, to believe that God will act with and through us. As narrative, it is a model of the stories we could tell each other about God's activity in our lives."

The worship planning committees met in early March and are well on their way to giving life to the work of the planning committee.

Atlanta was memorable because it was the first gathering of Mennonite Church USA this side of integration. Charlotte will also be memorable because it will be the first time Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA gather jointly. It will be good to watch friends and family reconnect in an assembly setting. I invite you to start making plans now to join us in July 2005. Don't stay quiet about this. Spread the word to others. See you in Charlotte. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **One church and one family at a time**—Leslie Homer-Cattell
- **Just adoptions**—Anton Flores

MPN board decides to vacate Scottdale

Will locate administrators, programs in Mennonite population centers

Mennonite Publishing Network, in a March 11 board meeting, decided to develop a long-term strategy to vacate its Scottdale, Pa., facility and begin locating programs and administrative positions in centers of Mennonite population in Canada and the United States. The transition to new locations could take up to five years.

A central factor in considering such a move was the MPN board's commitment to the new vision and network model for publishing.

"MPN has been called by the church to change from being a 'house' to becoming a 'network,'" said MPN board chair Ron Sawatsky, "responsive to the diverse and changing requirements of its constituency."

Less than half the 70,000-square-foot Scottdale facility is being used by MPN. With major changes over the past two years—staff downsizing that included the closing of the printing division—the number of Scottdale-based staff has been reduced from 95 to 30.

"The ongoing space needs for MPN have significantly decreased," said Phil Bontrager, MPN board member and treasurer. "The overhead cost associated with maintaining the current facility cannot be justified by MPN requirements alone."

The question about future facility requirements was further focused by a Facility Task Group appointed by the MPN board last fall. The task group considered various options for the Scottdale facility, ranging from shared commercial or residential use to community or church use. However, in order to know which options to explore in depth, the task group asked the board to indicate whether or not MPN will continue to utilize any part of its facility in Scottdale.

The board indicated that in the long term, MPN should limit the amount of property it owns and should not be a property landlord in Scottdale or elsewhere. Consequently the board decided to develop a plan to vacate the building in a way that is both financially and operationally feasible.

Alternate locations for MPN have not yet been determined. However, the board decided to announce its long-term direction to create the broad framework for ongoing planning.

On March 27, the Joint Executive Committee of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada endorsed the decision, underscoring the need for a sound financial plan as part of the long-term strategy (see page 21).

On March 30, Ron Rempel, executive director, shared the board's strategic direction with the MPN staff.—*Mennonite Publishing Network*

MPN has been called by the church to change from being a 'house' to becoming a 'network.' —Ron Sawatsky

Two new leaders for Executive Board

Staff restructuring marks shift in communication, fund-raising strategies

Barth Hague and Marty Lehman will join other members of Mennonite Church USA's staff to help chart the denomination's course. Both will be accountable to James Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

Hague, vice president of marketing services for MMA, the stewardship agency of Mennonite Church USA, began April 1 as interim director of communication. Lehman, CEO of Adriel School, a residential and foster-care ministry in West Liberty, Ohio, will begin July 1 as full-time director of financial development.

These appointments result from actions taken by the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA at its late January meeting, Schrag says. The board requested that he plan to collaborate with MMA based on the pew survey and communications inventory that Hague initiated in fall 2003 (see "Survey: One-Third Excited About Church," Feb. 17).

"Constituents told me in many spoken and unspoken ways that they want to commit to the denomination," says Hague, who will implement some of his recommendations arising from the survey-inventory. "They want to feel emotionally connected to the missional calling of Mennonite Church USA and want ownership in how that gets expressed in their communities and around the world."

That survey revealed that many constituents are still vague about Mennonite Church USA and thus are slow to support it financially. Hague hopes to help buoy the missional identity of the denomination, while Lehman hopes to help build its funding base.

"I believe younger generations have a lot to say to us about this," says Lehman, who worked at the former Mennonite Board of Missions and as director of admissions at Goshen (Ind.) College.

MMA is releasing Hague to work three-quarters time for the denomination. Funding for Lehman's position will be shared by Executive Board, MMA, Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Publishing Network and Mennonite Education Agency—*Laurie L. Oswald for Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Lehman

Hague

Health, service agencies form alliance

Network of institutions will be accountable to Mennonite Church USA.

Everett J. Thomas

George Stoltzfus, Lititz, Pa., addresses Mennonite Health Services members before the vote on new bylaws that will create MHS Alliance. At right is Joseph Landis, Lederach, Pa.

An association of some 70 health-care and human-service organizations formally joined together to become MHS Alliance on March 25. Their combined budgets total $892,651,000 with more than 1,500 employees serving 75,526 clients, many of whom are members of Anabaptist congregations in the United States.

Most of the MHS Alliance member organizations already relate—at least indirectly—to one of three U.S. denominations: Brethren in Christ, Mennonite Brethren and Mennonite Church USA. New bylaws adopted by representatives from those organizations will make MHS Alliance formally accountable to all three denominations after each denomination approves the bylaws, as expected, by July 1.

"[The bylaws] provide a degree of accountability and subordination to the relating denominations," says Rick Stiffney, CEO and president of Mennonite Health Services. "While we have three denominations that we relate to, Mennonite Church USA is the big one."

The new relationship to denominational structures is an about-face from the direction established for many of these same Mennonite institutions in the 1980s. At that time Mennonite healthcare and human-service organizations—most of which began as ministries of the church—were rebuffed when they asked for a formal accountability to denominational structures (see box).

"I remember Mennonite Church saying to us in 1985, 'You institutions are too complex for us,'" says Duane Oswald, Fresno, Calif. At the time, Oswald worked with Mennonite Mental Health Services; currently he owns a consulting business and is moderator of Mennonite Church USA.

The board structure, established by MHS Alliance provides six seats to be filled by the "relating denominations," six seats to be filled by member organizations and two at-large seats to be filled by the board itself. Of the six seats set aside for the three denominations, four will be for Mennonite Church USA. The Brethren in Christ and Mennonite Brethren denominations will each have one seat.

MHS Alliance members elected their six board members at the March 25-28 convention in San Francisco: Nancy Hopkins-Garriss, Broadway, Va.; John L. Martin, Maumee, Ohio; Wendell Rempel, Reedley, Calif.; F. Jay Shetler, Glendale, Ariz.; LaVern Yutzy, Mt. Gretna, Pa.; and Margaret Zook, Souderton, Pa.

In the "alliance" structure all organizations participate as equal members. In addition, 18 organizations are sponsored by MHS Alliance. That means they will be reviewed annually against a set of Alliance values and have acceded to MHS Alliance certain reserve powers, such as approval of their bylaws, appointment of some board members and Alliance participation in the hiring of a chief executive officer.

Stiffney said that the process of moving from Mennonite Health Services to MHS Alliance resulted in the organization growing: Only one former member dropped out while as many as nine new organizations are joining.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Welcome back

"Once again health-care services are a major denominational ministry," said Mennonite Church USA Moderator Duane Oswald during Mennonite Health Assembly (see article this page).

It's a story come full circle for Oswald, who served in 1987 on a task force formed in response to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)'s decision to withdraw oversight of the mental-health facilities it helped establish following World War II.

"MCC felt we were ready to go out on our own," said Oswald. "But we wanted accountability. When we turned to the Mennonite Church, they said our ministries were too specialized and sophisticated. We were encouraged to find our church connection with one another."

It was a similar story with the Mennonite-related nursing homes, retirement communities, acute-care hospitals and agencies serving children, youth and those with developmental disabilities. Many had been developed through [former Mennonite Church] Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM), but in the 1980s potential liability became a concern.

"The Pacific coast Methodist churches were sued for millions of dollars because of an incident at a health-care institution," explained Gene Yoder, CEO of Greencroft, a continuing-care retirement community in Goshen, Ind. "Many denominations were scared, and that played a role in the Mennonite Church deciding to get out of the health-care business."

Yoder said a letter from MBM directing Greencroft to find sponsorship elsewhere felt like a "bombshell." His board of directors wanted to maintain the accountability provided by their relationship to the denomination. Consequently, in 1988 Mennonite Health Services began serving providers formerly under MBM's umbrella. Mennonite Health Services now will become MHS Alliance, with accountability to three U.S. denominations. *—Leslie Homer-Cattell for Mennonite Health Services News Service*

'Can't Keep Quiet' Charlotte 2005 theme

Joint Executive Committee uncertain how to plan for joint delegate sessions

Although logistics for the Charlotte 2005 convention are falling into place, the Joint Executive Committee (JEC) is unsure what to do with three hours of time reserved for Canadian and U.S. delegates to meet jointly. This uncertainty follows an about-face on whether to even have a joint U.S.-Canada assembly in 2005.

In March 2003 the JEC decided to "discontinue our planning for a binational convention in 2005." But Mennonite Church Canada General Board rejected the JEC's decision and indicated they wanted to hold their 2005 gathering in Charlotte, N.C., with Mennonite Church USA.

The JEC debate on March 26-27 about what to do during three hours of joint delegate sessions at Charlotte 2005 quickly turned to the future of the relationship between Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA.

"If we want to have a serious relationship north and south," said Mennonite Church USA moderator-elect Roy Williams, "then we need to do more than get together and sing 'Kum Ba Yah.'"

Williams noted that racial-ethnic groups in Mennonite Church USA question why the U.S. church should have an ongoing and special relationship with Mennonite Church Canada.

"The European cultures [in the two denominations] feel it is very important … to get together," Williams said, "but within Mennonite Church USA, the white folks want to maximize relationships with the North, and Hispanics want to maximize relationships with the South."

Dan Nighswander, general secretary for Mennonite Church Canada, says Asian groups are the growth edge for his denomination; that means Canadian Mennonite relationships in the future will increasingly extend west.

"Our churches are moving in different directions," Nighswander says.

JEC directed the moderators and staff to bring a proposal for delegate sessions to their fall meeting.

We need to do more than get together and sing 'Kum Ba Yah.'
—Roy Williams

Theme: Other parts of the 2005 convention are decided, however. Convention planner Jorge Vallejos announced that the theme for the convention will be "Can't Keep Quiet." The theme was chosen by the convention planning committee as an expression of Acts 4:20. All worship sessions will be joint as well as workshops and tours.

Participants from the United States will pay a registration fee of $165 U.S., which is the same amount charged for the Atlanta 2003 and Nashville 2001 conventions. Canadian delegates will pay $75 Canadian, while Canadian youth convention participants will be able to pay their $165 registration fee in Canadian dollars. However, all participants will pay room and board in U.S. dollars. The 13-meal plan will be $167, and the average hotel room price will be $75 per night. Vallejos said that the average hotel room rate in Charlotte will be lower than the average hotel room rates were at the 2003 Canadian and U.S. conventions.

Charlotte 2005 will begin Monday, July 4, and conclude on Saturday, July 9. Vallejos said this schedule will be less problematic than former schedules for those who take off work to attend.

The JEC also heard a financial report from Mennonite Publishing Network leaders and ratified the MPN board's action to develop a plan to vacate their facility in Scottdale, Pa., within five years (see page 19).—*Everett J. Thomas*

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Muslim tribe celebrates Bible translation

In culture where few can read, cassette tapes shared around evening fires

Seeds planted over three decades blossomed and bore sweet fruit when people from various parts of the West African country of Burkina Faso gathered to dedicate two books of portions of the Bible in the Samogho language last month. The event celebrated God's written word and Samogho culture in Saraba, a remote village where only a handful of people read and write.

What we experienced was that people loved to talk about their religious beliefs.
—Donna Entz

Burkina Faso has been home for the Donna and Loren Entz family since the 1970s. There they minister with the support of Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission and Mennonite Mission Network. The three Entz children learned to work alongside Burkinabé friends while their parents learned the Samogho language and gained the confidence of the village elders.

"Before our arrival in Burkina Faso, we were told that we might be obliged to do some sort of development work in order to earn a hearing for the gospel message [among a Muslim people]," Donna says. "What we experienced was that people loved to talk about their religious beliefs, and we could be very open in talking about our relationship with God. Had we gone with the idea that it was wrong to share our faith with these brothers and sisters, we would almost certainly have been cut off from any deep relationship."

From the beginning of their ministry in Burkina Faso, the Entzes were opposed to mass evangelistic campaigns because they felt the here-today-gone-tomorrow approach inoculated people against radical discipleship. They chose instead an incarnational strategy emphasizing deeply rooted relationships and the powerful impact of God's Word shared in a people's native tongue.

Working as a team with educated Muslim translators, Donna and Loren began to translate Bible stories. During the translation process, the translators decided to become followers of Jesus and founded the first Samogho church.

Over the years, the biblical story of salvation has been shared around evening fires—the Samogho schoolroom—where traditional stories pass on values to subsequent generations. To further extend the impact of the story of Jesus, solar-powered cassette players have been given to village elders in neighboring villages.

The 22 one-hour cassettes feature 80 Old Testament narratives, the Gospel of Luke and the story of the early church found in the first chapters of Acts.—*Lynda Hollinger-Janzen for Mennonite Mission Network News Service*

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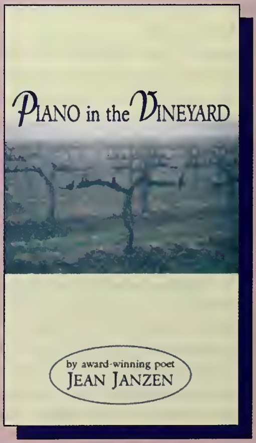

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Calling all cooks

MCC invites recipes, food testers.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Herald Press will produce a new cookbook following in the tradition of *More-with-Less* and *Extending the Table*. The book, to be written by nutritionist Mary Beth Lind and journalist Cathleen Hockman-Wert, will encourage eating locally produced foods, in season.

"Today the average item of food travels over 1,000 miles before it lands on our tables," Lind says. "The results are far-reaching but seldom considered by consumers. This new cookbook will explore how the foods we put on our tables impact our local and global neighbors."

Today the average item of food travels over 1,000 miles before it lands on our tables.
—Mary Beth Lind

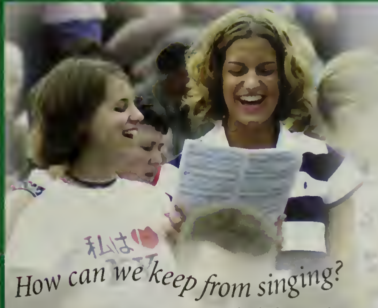
Recipes will be collected from a variety of sources, including MCC constituents, and tested by volunteers following the model of the other books in MCC's World Community Cookbook series.

A Web site will serve as a clearinghouse for these activities. At www.morewithless.org, interested people can submit recipes for possible use in the book, volunteer to be testers and give feedback about the recipes they've tested.

Hockman-Wert and Lind are seeking simple, nutritious and delicious dishes prepared with whole foods, but with 21st-century twists such as pesto and tofu. Highest priority will be given to recipes that use primarily ingredients that are ripe in one season.

MCC constituents are invited to share their own reflections on eating with the seasons on the www.morewithless.org discussion board. Those without Web access may request a recipe submission form by calling 888-563-4676.—*Mennonite Central Committee News Service*

Hymn Sing *for* Peace
6th Annual • May 22, 2004 • 2:00-3:30 p.m.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CALENDAR

6th Annual Hymn Sing for Peace, U.S. Capitol Building Reflecting Pool steps, ***Washington, D.C.,*** May 22, 2:00-2:30 p.m. For more information call 804-359-1308; email leshorning@aol.com; or go to http://peace.mennolink.org/hymnsing.

WORKERS

Rodriguez-Lora, Nancy, was licensed March 21 as pastor at Roselawn Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Ulrich, Sarah, began a one-year voluntary service assignment in the Hertford (England) Community Church March 22 with Mennonite Mission Network's Youth Ministry.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bauman, Carly Avery, March 17, to Rod and Gloria Brubacher Bauman, Elmira, Ont.

Browning, James Laurence, March 11, to Brian and Sharon A. Browning, Cary, N.C.

Emerson, Elliott Charles, March 2, to Bruce and Marguerite Mongrue Emerson, Des Allemands, La.

Good, Austin Travis, March 3, to Travis and Janie Lucas Good, Ephrata, Pa.

Hamm, Madelynn Faith, March 13, to Kevin and Renee Schmidt Hamm, Newton, Kan.

Kauffman, Ryli Nicole, Jan. 2, to Roger and Jody Kauffman, Gibson City, Ill.

Maillet, Lexi Brooke, March 5, to Brad and Carmen Hackman Maillet, Luling, La.

Martin, Brittany Ann, Aug. 19, 1994, received for adoption March 18 by Clair M. and Charlene Hoover Martin, Manheim, Pa.

Mast-Hochestedler, Norah Grace, Feb. 27, to Ben Hochestedler and Sarah Mast, Milwaukee, Wis.

McMannis, Hunter Wilson, Jan. 6, to Michael and Kristy Ramirez McMannis, Pa.

Phengsitthy, Rachel, March 1, to Kevin and Sivilay Phengsitthy, Harrisonburg, Va.

Rhodes, Sidney Louise, March 15, to Winston and Rene Emswiler Rhodes, Harrisonburg, Va.

Schlosser, Rebecca Joy, Jan. 19, to Todd and Lynn Ellwood Schlosser, Pawnee Rock, Kan.

Schrag, Jacob Warren and Timothy Daniel (twins), March 8, to Eric and Gretchen Gering Schrag, Goessel, Kan.

Terven, Blake Alexander, March 17, to Kevin and Amy Rogers Terven, Dewey, Del.

Trost, Anika Lynn, Feb. 3, to Matthew and Crystal Good Trost, Harrisonburg, Va.

MARRIAGES

Davidhizar/Horner: Joyce Hershberger Davidhizar, Hollsopple, Pa., and Jack Horner, Hollsopple, Feb. 28 at Beca House, Thomasdale, Pa.

Fawcett/Mauton: Derek Fawcett, Sterling, Ohio, and Samantha Mauton, Kansas City, Mo., Jan. 10 at Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

Nelsen/Rinlee: Lacey Nelsen, Dorchester, Neb., and Matt Rinlee, Lindale, Texas, Feb. 7 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford, Neb.

Nisly/Sommers: Robin Nisly, Hartville, Ohio, and Brendan Sommers, Jan 17 at Hartville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

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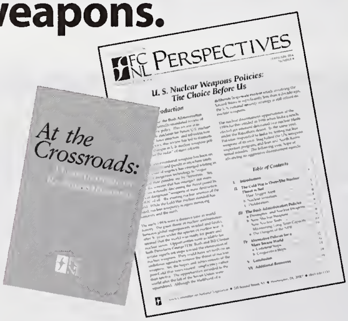

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DEATHS

Basinger, Doris L. Maust, 78, Harrisonburg, Va., died Feb. 29. Spouse: Clair Basinger. Parents: Richard and Elizabeth Gundon Maust. Children: Darlene Harman, Carolyn Wheeler, Debbie Bollinger, Eileen Smith; eight grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Burial: March 4 at Lindale Mennonite Church Cemetery, Linville, Va.

Beachy, Dorothy Kilbourne, 74, Pigeon, Mich., died March 12 of cancer. Spouse: Vernon Beachy. Parents: Ray and Laura Kilbourne. Children: Benny, Lenny, Kenny, Jill Champagne, Brad; 12 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: March 15 at Michigan Avenue Mennonite Church, Pigeon.

Brenneman, Velma Whitaker, 85, Portland, Ore., died March 14 of cancer. Spouse: Calvin M. Brenneman. Parents: John and Nancy Whitaker. Children: Cal, Del; four grandchildren. Funeral: March 20 at Albany (Ore.) Mennonite Church.

Gerber, Clifford, 81, Dalton, Ohio, died March 13. Parents: Oscar and Elvina Gerber. Funeral: March 16 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Harshbarger, Geneva E., 90, West Liberty, Ohio, died March 7. Spouse: Orrie Harshbarger (deceased). Parents: Moses H. and Lillie Geiger Brenneman. Children: Paul, Kathy, Linda Heiser, Jane Kauffman; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 10 at Bethel Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

Herr, John Groff, 92, Lititz, Pa., died March 3 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Ellen Hostetter Herr. Parents: Jacob Landis and Mary Buckwalter Herr. Children: John Bucher, Barbara Ann Ranck, Mary Ellen Herr Brubaker (deceased); 10 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 6 at Landis Homes West Bethany Chapel, Lititz.

Kaufman, Elvin, 91, Marion, S.D., died Jan. 23. Spouse: (1st) Pfronafay Underhill Kaufman (deceased), (2nd) Mabel Arbeiter Kaufman (deceased). Parents: John D. and Sarah Schrag Kaufman. Children: Stephanie Goergen, Valarie Backhaus, Marya Leber, Pam Strickland; 12 grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 29 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Millhouse, Mary E., 89, Mountville, Pa., died Feb. 19 of cancer. Parents: David W. and Ellen R. Newcomer Millhouse. Funeral: Feb. 22 at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Musselman, Harold H., 79, Harleysville, Pa., died March 9. Spouse: Kathryn Erb Musselman. Parents: John and Laura Hunsberger Musselman. Children: H. Brent, David L., Sue Moyer, Laurie E. Mason; 12 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Memorial service: March 12 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville.

Peachey, John D., 76, Wellman, Iowa, died March 14. Spouse: Mildred Brenneman Peachey. Parents: Aaron J. and Katie M. Peachey. Children: Beth Miller, Robert; four grandchildren. Funeral: March 20 at Wooster (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Petersheim, Betty Lou Wingard, 71, East Earl, Pa., died March 15 of cancer. Spouse: LeRoy K. Petersheim. Parents: Robert E. and Katie Blough Wingard. Children: Jon Robert, Beth Ann Good, Anna Ruth Gawlinksi; five grandchildren. Funeral: March 20 at Forest Hills Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Raber, Christ J., 90, Plain City, Ohio, died Feb. 18. Spouse: Elizabeth Schlabach Raber. Parents: John B. and Susan B. Miller Raber. Children: David, Stephen, Barbara Ann Meyer, Phillip, Paul, Tim, Martha Ellen (deceased); six grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 21 at Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City.

Rouner, Evelyn, 82, Hesston, Kan., died March 5. Parents: Jacob and Emma Mae Reber Rouner. Funeral: March 14 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Schrag, Blanche Aeschliman, 94, Moses Lake, Wash., died Feb. 29. Spouse: Alvie R. Schrag (deceased). Parents: Samuel R. and Ida Sommers Aeschliman. Children: Loren, Beth Stucky, Tim, Kay; nine grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 6 at Menno Mennonite Church, Ritzville, Wash.

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Showalter, Esther Trauger, 79, Harrisonburg, Va., died March 5. Spouse: Omar V. Showalter. Parents: Raymond and Mary Rice Trauger. Children: Ruth E. Hochstetler, Lois Showalter Blankenship, Paul, Jess; 10 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 10 at Lindale Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Stoltzfus, Elizabeth (Betty), 78, Gordonville, Pa., died March 10. Spouse: John F. Stoltzfus. Parents: Ammon S. and Lillie Smoker Stoltzfus. Children: Randell, Rodger, Robert, Richard, Ray, William, Rose Sharp, Ruth Smucker; 14 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 14 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

Stutzman, Fannie Boley, 86, Massillon, Ohio, died March 10. Spouse: Paul M. Stutzman (deceased). Parents: Joe S. and Katie Boley. Children: William, Nancy Wengerd, Ollen, Josephine Kipfer, Thomas; 18 grandchildren; 33 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 15 at Hartville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Suttinger, Gwendolyn, 76, North Lima, Ohio, died March 15. Spouse: Joseph Suttinger (deceased). Parents: Cecil and Martha Gibson Kerr. Funeral: March 18 in North Lima.

Thomas, Sem D., 91, Thomas Mills, Pa., died March 7 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Erie E. Thomas (deceased). Parents: Lawrence and Lizzie Johns Thomas. Funeral: March 10 at Thomas Mennonite Church.

Unruh, Clara Friesen, 83, Dinuba, Calif., died March 16 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Ted Unruh (deceased). Parents: William and Helen Benke Friesen. Children: Alfred, Gilbert, Clarence, Jean; nine grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: March 19 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley, Calif.

Weldy, James, 47, New Paris, Ind., died March 6 of melanoma. Spouse: Linda Weldy. Parents: Robert and Zoa Weldy. Children: Curtis, Shawn. Funeral: March 9 at North Main Street Mennonite Church, Nappanee, Ind.

Yoder, Mary Kathryn Brunk, 92, Rocky Ford, Co., died Feb. 12. Spouse: Paul L. Yoder (deceased). Parents: Jesse and Myrta Berry Brunk. Children: P. Kenneth, infant son and daughter (deceased); four grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Feb. 17 at Rocky Ford Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Paul L., 70, Hartville, Ohio, died March 17. Spouse: Mary Lou Yoder (deceased). Parents: Homer and Nancy Yoder. Children: Julia, Scott; four grandchildren. Funeral: March 20 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

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Archives and special collections librarian beginning Aug. 1. This 12-month position has primary responsibility for the archives and the Mennonite historical collections. The focus of this position is in the development of a program that supports the integration of these collections into the curriculum of the college and encourages undergraduate research. Required: Master's degree from an ALA-accredited program; archives and/or special collections experience and training, including preservation; commitment to user-oriented library services and undergraduate research; excellent oral and written communication skills. Preferred: Minimum three years experience in an academic library setting; broad knowledge of Mennonite and Anabaptist history and thought; reading knowledge of German; familiarity with MARC format cataloging for special collections materials and knowledge of current archival descriptive practices.
Assistant professor in art for one year (with possible extension) beginning fall semester 2004. Teach courses in graphic design and two-dimensional studio media. Additional assignments in art foundations and general education. MFA in graphic design with two years professional experience. Expertise in painting and drawing or printmaking also preferred. In addition to the materials listed below, submit an exhibition record with the vita and a slide portfolio featuring 20 works of art.

Review of applications begins immediately and continues until an appointment is made. Send letter of interest, vita, three letters of reference (submitted directly from the referee) and official transcripts to Elaine Suderman, Academic Affairs, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196. Bluffton College welcomes applications from all academically qualified persons who respect the Anabaptist-Mennonite peace church tradition and wholly endorse Christian higher education in a liberal arts environment. Equal opportunity employer. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply.
<http://www.bluffton.edu/about/employment/index.html>.

Cove Valley Youth Camp near Mercersburg, Pa., is accepting applications for the position of ***executive director***. This position will be available in July 2004. This person is responsible for the overall operation of the camp, including rentals, promotion, hiring and supervising staff. The executive director works with the program director in managing the summer youth camps and with the caretaker in overseeing the camp facilities. Please send resumé to Del Martin, 1910 Spring View Drive, Chambersburg, PA 17201; email del@delprint.com.

Filer Mennonite Church, in south-central Idaho, a stable and mature congregation of 50, is looking for the ***pastor*** that God has prepared for us. All inquiries treated with respect and confidentiality. Gary Hooley, chair, pastor search committee, 3575 N 2300 E., Filer, ID 83328; 208-326-5245.

First Mennonite Church in Denver is seeking an ***associate pastor of faith formation.*** This is a new position focused on (1) Christian-Anabaptist/Mennonite education, (2) enriching development of each one's faith journey, (3) encouraging the understanding of one's faith in daily living and (4) assisting in spiritual direction for individuals and the congregation as a whole. The successful candidate should have seminary training, be strongly rooted in Anabaptist beliefs and have some background with the Mennonite tradition (faith experience, pastorate or seminary training). The applicant should complete the MLI through Mennonite Church USA and submit to Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference.

For a full job description and information about First Mennonite Church, applicants are encouraged to contact Arden Slotter at slottera@aol.com or visit our church Web site, www.fmcdenver.org, or write c/o First Mennonite Church, 430 W. 9th Ave., Denver, CO 80204.

Niagara United Mennonite Church, in beautiful Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., requires a full-time senior ***pastor,*** to work with a pastoral team, for a 600-member congregation. Candidate should be an enthusiastic individual willing to provide spiritual leadership and guidance and committed to an Anabaptist understanding of faith. For more information please contact Search Committee, R.R.#2, 1775 Niagara Stone Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0; sigwiens@vaxxine.com.

Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church, seeks half-time ***associate pastor*** on multistaff team. Candidate should have specific interest in spiritual formation (children), small groups and worship. Accepting submissions through April 24. Send inquiries to Ty Buxman, chair of the search committee; personnel@pmcweb.org; 626-398-8224.

Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio, is seeking candidates for the full-time position of ***minister of youth.*** Candidates should have strong Anabaptist beliefs and have a passion for children, youth and young adults. Full job description is available by contacting Kelvin Friesen at 419-445-0856 or kelfriesen@rtecexpress.net.

Mellinger Mennonite Church, a 400-member congregation in Lancaster, Pa., is seeking candidates for lead ***pastor.*** Candidates should have strong biblical and Anabaptist beliefs, be good in preaching and administration, and be able to work well in a team ministry. Please contact Paul M. Zehr, 209 Henrietta Ave., Lancaster, PA 17602; phone 717-299-6104; email zehrpm@emu.edu.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking qualified applicants for the position of ***director of alumni and parent relations.*** This position is responsible for the alumni and parent constituencies of the university: to listen and secure their advocacy, to promote the mission of EMU and to encourage participation and support. The director plans alumni and parent programs that achieve the above purposes. Bachelor's degree required. Experience in alumni and parent relations programming preferred. Must demonstrate strong verbal, written and administrative skills.

For more information visit our Web site at www.emu.edu. Send letter of application, resumé and three references to: Human Resources Office, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; fax 540-432-4444. Review of applications will begin immediately. The position will remain open until filled. Persons who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

Oaklawn Psychiatric Center in northern Indiana has an immediate opening for a ***psychologist.*** Doctoral degree meeting the requirements for Indiana licensure. Indiana license with HSPP endorsement or eligibility preferred. Salary is commensurate with experience and qualifications.

You may send a resumé via mail, fax or email to Human Resources, Oaklawn, P.O. Box 809, Goshen, IN 46527; fax 574-537-2698; email humanresources@oaklawn.org. Learn more about us and other opportunities available by visiting www.oaklawn.org. An equal opportunity employer.

Tri County Mennonite Homes (TCMH) invites applications for the position of ***executive director.*** TCMH, with its head office in New Hamburg, Ont. is a not-for-profit charitable corporation sponsored by 18 congregations of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. TCMH is a comprehensive community resource serving the counties of Waterloo, Perth and Oxford that provides residential services for seniors ranging from independent housing through to long-term care as well as services to adults with developmental disabilities. The executive director is accountable to and responsible for implementing the actions and directions of the TCMH's board of directors and for coordinating the activities of the corporate office staff, in addition to supporting the administrators in each of three operating divisions.

A full employment description is available online at www.tcmhomes.com. Resumés for this position will be received until April 26 and may be submitted by email to ed.search@tcmhomes.com; or mailed to Search Committee Chair, Tri County Mennonite Homes, 200 Boullee St., New Hamburg, Ont. N3A 2K4.

Penn View Christian School is seeking a ***librarian*** beginning in the 2004-05 school year. This individual will provide vision, leadership and management for all aspects of a technology focused media center including the instruction of students (K-5) in library and information access skills. Experience in teaching is preferred; advanced degree in library science is helpful. Candidate must be willing to pursue certification in library science. Penn View offers a Christ-centered, academically excellent education for students in preschool through eighth grade. Send your resumé to Robert Rutt, Executive Director, Penn View Christian School, 420 Cowpath Road, Souderton, PA 18964; 215-723-1196; email brutt@pennview.org.

Help send *The Mennonite* to overseas mission workers! Donate to *The Mennonite*'s overseas mission workers and leaders fund. Send donations to *The Mennonite*, OMWL fund, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.15 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available.

To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Marla Cole, or email TheMennonite@TheMennonite.org.

Unique reunion opportunity in Pennsylvania for families. Because of a shift in **Spruce Lake Retreat's** 2004 summer calendar, two weeks have opened up in our otherwise full summer schedule that may provide an ideal time for your family reunion: June 6-11 and June 13-18. As a special offer, during these two weeks only, family groups will receive a 20-percent discount on all meals and lodging. Rates include full use of Spruce Lake's beautiful Pocono Mountain property and numerous recreation options. First come, first served! For reservations, please call Spruce Lake Retreat at 800-822-7505; email info@sprucelake.org; or visit the Web at www.sprucelake.org.

Lake Center Christian School is accepting applications for the following positions: full-time ***special needs coordinator***; full-time ***J.H./H.S. science teacher***; part-time ***phys. ed. teacher***; part-time ***Spanish teacher.*** LCCS is a K-10 school (adding 11th and 12th over the next two years) of 500 students in the Akron-Canton area. For an application and further information, contact Matt McMullen, Superintendent, at 330-877-2049, ext. 32 or lccsmmcmullen@yahoo.com. Lake Center Christian School, 12893 Kaufman Ave. N.W., Hartville, OH 44685.

Jubilee Association of Maryland provides residential and supported-living services to adults who have developmental disabilities. We have two key positions:
Director of program services to provide leadership and supervise nine professional staff and all services to 90 participants. Req: B.A./B.S. (master's preferred); five years relevant and progressively responsible experience. Starts mid- to upper 40s.
Program manager to supervise team of 10-15 staff and the services they provide in group homes and semi-independent living. BA/BS in human service field and minimum two years experience required. Starts mid-30s plus great benefits.

Please visit our Web site: www.jubileemd.org for a complete listing of our services, positions and benefits. Email cover letter and resumé to hrmanager@jubileemd.org or mail to 10408 Montgomery Ave. Kensington, MD 20895.

Camp Deerpark is seeking to fill the position of ***food service director.*** This person is responsible for all aspects of food service, including planning menus, food preparation and supervision of kitchen volunteers and staff. Salaried position with benefits, including housing and insurance. Camp Deerpark is owned and operated by the New York City Mennonite Churches and offers people of all ages, races and backgrounds the opportunity to enjoy Christian camping at an affordable price. For more information please contact Ken Bontrager at 845-754-8669 or Deerpark@warwick.net.

Mennonite Home Communities invites applicants for the position of ***director of development.*** The director of development will be responsible for developing, planning, organizing and implementing creative fund-raising activities, projects and special events. The position will work to increase funds available for benevolent care, building programs and other needs. Requirements include a bachelor's degree and three to five years experience in fund-raising.

Please submit resumés to Dave Shenk, VP Human Resources, Mennonite Home Communities, 1520 Harrisburg Pike, Lancaster, PA 17601; email dshenk@mennonitehome.org; phone 717-390-7963.

Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore., is seeking candidates for the following positions:
Spanish instructor, teaching Spanish levels I-IV for grades 8-12 beginning August 2004. Spanish cultural experience desired, certification required; also desire coaching and/or advisor capabilities. Full-time, salaried position.
Bible instructor, teaching Bible classes for middle and high-school levels; currently part-time load; may be combined with other teaching duties for full-time; teacher certification and/or experience desired. Position begins August 2004.

For more information, contact Principal Eric Martin at 503-363-2000 or martines@teleport.com.

Warwick River Christian School, www.wrcs.info, is seeking Mennonite ***certified teachers*** for fall openings in Grades 1-8. Respond to Administrator Gordon Zook, 252 Lucas Creek Road, Newport News, VA 23602; 757-877-2941 or gorzook@yahoo.com.

Landis Homes, a Continuing Care Retirement Community located in a rural setting southeast of Lititz, Pa., is seeking a ***vice president of resident services*** providing administrative supervision and guidance to resident programs and services in health care, assisted living, residential living, home services and adult day services. Qualifications include a college degree in health administration or related management field, budgetary and financial management skills/experience and registered nurse (RN) licensure or health-care/clinical experience preferred. A nursing home administrator license and supervisory experience in long-term care are helpful.

Submit resumé to Human Resources, Landis Homes, 1001 E. Oregon Road, Lititz, PA 17543; fax 717-581-3899; email aheinly@landishomes.org. For more information about Landis Homes, visit our Web site, www.landishomes.org.

Hesston College invites applicants for the position of ***theater director*** to begin August 2004. Responsibilities of this two-thirds-time position include directing the theater program and teaching theater classes. Depending upon the candidate's qualifications, additional courses will be added to this position to complete a full-time load. Qualifications include directing experience, teaching experience, innovative spirit, love of students and commitment to Mennonite higher education, Mennonite Church USA and the mission of Hesston College. M.F.A. preferred, M.A. considered.

Send letter of interest, vita, evidence of theater direction experience, three reference letters and official transcripts to Marc Yoder, Academic Dean, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062, or email inquiries to marcusy@hesston.edu. Review of applications begins immediately and continues until the position is filled.

Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College invites applications for a full-time ***development officer.*** The Merry Lea development officer will initiate donor contacts, solicit gifts, plan donor events and coordinate capital fund-raising activities. All donor relationship-building activities are in support of the mission of Merry Lea. The development officer reports to the executive director of Merry Lea and works in partnership with the Goshen College Advancement Department. Bachelor's degree required. Master's degree or equivalent experience preferred. Fund-raising experience in educational institutions preferred, three to five years minimum, or other related experience in business, organizational leadership, sales, etc.

To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, www.goshen.edu. Women and minority persons are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Administrative and teaching faculty members are expected to share this commitment.

Calling all "over-50s" health and fitness enthusiasts!

4th Senior Sports Classic

June 17-19, 2004 — Harrisonburg, VA
Sponsored by Mennonite Association of Retired Persons
Hosted by Eastern Mennonite University and
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The 40+ competitive events and the SSC banquet are scheduled so that participants may also take in EMU's Bach Festival on campus. All are welcome to compete or to cheer and to enjoy!

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For more information about MARP, SSC, or short-term service (SOOP) assistance, contact:
Helen L. Lapp, Executive Director; 215-721-7730
marp-soop@juno.com ~ http://marp.mennonite.net

Older Adults Living with Spirit

Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College invites applications for a newly opened, full-time position in ***agroecology.*** The academic focus of this position is in the field of agroecology. The assistant professor of agroecology is responsible for designing and teaching pilot courses in the summer program. The role of the collegiate program director includes program development, student recruitment, grant writing and collaboration with other institutions of higher education and professional organizations. The programs and pedagogy will utilize Merry Lea's distinctive field opportunities. A graduate degree in an area of agroecology is required, with preference given to candidates with a doctorate and/or significant relevant work experience related to the administrative functions of the job description.

To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, www.goshen.edu. Women and minority persons are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Administrative and teaching faculty members are expected to share this commitment.

Eastern Mennonite University, Lancaster, Pa., branch, seeks ***director*** for the M.A. in Education program. Director will provide leadership to M.A. in Education program and teach courses. Ph.D. preferred. Responsible for vision, marketing, recruitment and candidate advisement. Position open July 2004. EMU seeks persons who are supportive of Anabaptist-Mennonite Christian faith practices.

Candidates send letter of application, vitae, transcripts and three references to Beryl Brubaker, Academic Provost and Graduate Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, or email provost@emu.edu. Review will begin immediately. AAEO employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

Anabaptists! *Anabaptist Connections* newsletter available. Newsletter reviews Swiss-Anabaptist reconciliation status and timely articles. Also the book *Rekindling the Anabaptist Flame*. $10 P.P.D. Phone 406-293-2442 or 406-293-2980; HCR61 Box 140RD, Bonners Ferry, ID 83805.

Eastern Mennonite University seeks part-time ***pastoral ministry program director,*** Lancaster, Pa., to implement an associate degree-level program for pastors in Lancaster Mennonite Conference. Will increase to full-time in future. Master's degree in pastoral/theological field and pastoral experience required. Doctorate preferred. Experience in adult education including expertise in nontraditional delivery systems preferred. Position open July 2004.

Candidates send letter of application, vitae, transcripts and three references to Beryl Brubaker, Academic Provost and Graduate Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, or email to provost@emu.edu. Review will begin immediately. AAEO employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

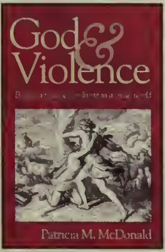
Spruce Lake Retreat, a dynamic, multifaceted camping ministry relating to the Mennonite Church, seeks a ministry-minded person with fund-raising experience to serve at least three-quarter-time as ***development associate.*** This person will work alongside our development director in soliciting gifts for our current major capital campaign and in planning and coordinating fund-raising activities. Salary and liberal benefits package provided. On-camp housing may be available if needed, or applicant may work out of their home community if within a reasonable proximity. Spruce Lake Retreat is located in the Pocono Mountains of northeastern Pennsylvania.

Send resumé to Executive Director, RR 1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; phone 800-822-7505; fax 570-595-0328; email director@sprucelake.org.

Mennonite Publishing Network is seeking a ***director of operations***. Responsibilities include: providing on-site supervision for MPN's administrative support services currently located in Scottdale, Pa.; helping develop and implement a long-term strategy to relocate MPN operations to centers of Mennonite population. This new position is required by MPN as soon as possible.

Contact Ron Rempel, executive director, rrempel@mph.org, 519-496-9487.

Biblical Resources from Herald Press



God and Violence: *Biblical Resources for Living in a Small World*

From the medieval crusades to the latest violence in the Middle East, warriors have long claimed the Bible's support for their battles. **Patricia M. McDonald** argues that many biblical stories, read as part of a canon from Genesis to Revelation, contain resources for turning violence to service of God and humanity. As varied and complex as life itself, these narratives can provide us with imaginative possibilities and steady motivation to move beyond the narrow defensiveness and self-interest that are becoming ever more problematic in an increasingly interconnected world.
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Paper, 304 pages, $24.99

Additional volumes: *Genesis; Exodus; Judges; Ruth, Jonah, Esther; Jeremiah; Ezekiel; Daniel; Hosea, Amos; Matthew; Mark: Acts; 2 Corinthians; Ephesians; Colossians, Philemon; 1-2 Thessalonians; 1-2 Peter, Jude; and Revelation.*

Herald Press

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Looking for God in all the pop places

Gordon Houser

One of the premises of this column is that the wider culture and its artifacts (media) are the ocean we swim in, the air we breathe, and we need to pay attention to what is going on there. Craig Detweiler and Barry Taylor go further: "Popular culture stands as a vibrant and vital arena of spiritual expression."

In their book *A Matrix of Meanings: Finding God in Pop Culture* (Baker Academic, 2003, $17.99) they "examine different aspects of popular culture 'not as ends in themselves but as means of unlocking their meaning in the culture as a whole.' " Whether we like it or not, ads, movies, television and music have a huge influence on people—including us. These writers go so far as to call pop culture "the collected wisdom of our era."

They are more positive than I am (and you may think I'm too positive) about popular culture. Nevertheless, I agree with them that the church dare not ignore the wider culture or the spiritual hunger it shows. They write, "There is a conversation about God going on in popular culture that the church is not engaged in and is often unaware of."

Detweiler teaches mass communications and is a screenwriter. Taylor teaches theology and is a professional musician and painter. Together they tackle the ambitious task of exploring the interplay of a Christian worldview with various aspects of popular culture. They include chapters on advertising, celebrities, music, movies, television, fashion, sports and art. The breadth of their coverage of these areas is impressive, and a discussion group could spend several rewarding sessions with each of these chapters.

Here are just a few provocative nuggets: "Advertising has replaced spirituality as our shaping story." "People are not as naive or as gullible as we sometimes think they are." "We should take seriously the religious function of both advertising and consumerism." "Fashion is a series of signs that unlock at least part of the pop culture psyche." "Art continually explores new ways of expressing timeless facts about human existence. Theology often seems intent on simply maintaining the status quo, and that will not suffice in these times."

Also sure to provoke discussion, Detweiler and Taylor conclude with "A Top 10 Theology" that speaks to the new, postmodern era we live in:

10. Post-national—Diverse
9. Post-rational—Experiential
8. Post-literal—Mythological
7. Post-scientific/technological—Mysterious
6. Post-sexual—Embodied
5. Post-racial—Colorful
4. Post-human—Real
3. Post-traumatic/therapeutic—Bloody
2. Post-ethical/institutional—Humorous
1. Post-Christian—Loving.

These writers believe "popular culture continues to redefine the relationship between the sacred and the secular, the holy and the profane. People of faith should do the same." Yes, we should.

BOOKS

Fierce Goodbye: Living in the Shadow of Suicide by G. Lloyd Carr and Gwendolyn C. Carr (Herald Press, 2004, $10.99) tells of one family dealing with suicide (the authors' daughter-in-law), offers guidance and provides a summary of Christian thinking about suicide, which families and pastors will find useful. The title comes from one of Gwendolyn Carr's poems interspersed through the book.

FILMS

The Barbarian Invasions (R), which won the Oscar for best foreign-language film, is about death—both the imminent death of a retired professor in Montreal and the looming death of civilization. The dying man, surrounded by his ex-wife, friends, former mistresses and his estranged son, shuns religion yet experiences a mysterious grace as his life draws to an end.

DISTURBING STATS

- More Bethlehemites live in Chile than in Bethlehem. Today Christian Palestinians make up less than 2 percent of the population of Israel-Palestine.—*New York Review of Books*, quoted in *Context*
- All told, America is taking 75 gallons of groundwater for every 60 that nature puts back in. The Ogallala Aquifer, which stretches from North Dakota to Texas and supports a fifth of the irrigated farmland in the United States, is half gone. In 2001, the Rio Grande ceased flowing into the Gulf of Mexico.—*Jonathan Rowe in* Business Ethics, *quoted in* The Marketplace
- Black Americans are less likely than white Americans to own homes, don't earn as much as whites, don't live as long and don't do as well in school. Black earning power is about 73 percent that of whites.—*National Urban League in a report released March 31*

Mennonites and cinema

Joe Longacher of First Mennonite Church, Richmond, Va., writes in the church's newsletter about a group of members who watched movies, then met to discuss them. Joe writes that movies "can evoke a wide spectrum of emotional response to spiritual themes and provide opportunity for dialogue among those of widely divergent reactions." They discussed each movie's story line, identified heroes and villains, noted whether or not there was a Christ figure and what moral lessons might be gleaned from it. Over a 3½-year period they discussed about 30 movies, including *The Cider House Rules, Keeping the Faith, You Can Count on Me, Chocolat, Finding Forrester, A Beautiful Mind, In the Bedroom, Rabbit-Proof Fence, About Schmidt, Bruce Almighty* and *Seabiscuit.—MennoNet* (March)

Goshen (Ind.) College held its second annual Hazel Wolf Environmental Film Festival March 31-April 2. The 16 films covered such topics as industrial agriculture, wetlands biodiversity, pesticides, Thomas Berry, consumption and "timber wars."—*Goshen College News Service*

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Everett J. Thomas

The tide turns

A rising tide lifts all boats. In this case, the tide is God's Spirit moving under Mennonite Church USA. Just as one cannot literally see the tide move up the shoreline, neither is it possible to see changes immediately. But by looking away for a while and then back, the change becomes clear.

Over the past months, an accumulation of evidence points to Mennonite Church USA gathering momentum. The following developments illustrate the good news:

- Lancaster Mennonite Conference bishops recommended to their congregations that their conference become a permanent member of Mennonite Church USA. South Central Mennonite Conference leaders did the same, and now New York conference follows suit (page 6).
- A powerful group of organizations—with the new name MHS Alliance—want to connect with Mennonite Church USA for primary accountability (page 20). This alliance, with nearly $900 million in operating budgets and 1,500 employees, sees strength emerging in Mennonite Church USA and is determined to align itself with our denomination.
- Funding for denominational programs and agencies has begun to stabilize; most ended their recent fiscal years with more money than expected after reducing their budgets.

God has been faithful to us. Our new denomination is being lifted by God's providence and graciousness.

- The Constituency Leaders Council—which functions as a rough parallel in Mennonite Church USA to the council of elders in Acts 15 that led the New Testament church—has finally worked through the big and potentially divisive issues around church membership. At their last meeting, this group of key leaders was able to step back and examine the important rather than the urgent.
- The identity of the new denomination is making significant headway. From a dead start three years ago, a recent survey showed that already one-quarter of the members in Mennonite Church USA understand that this denomination's identity will be different from the identities of its predecessor denominations. In ecumenical circles, leaders from other denominations are amazed at how quickly Mennonites are coming to see that the church's responsibility is to respond to ways God is already at work in the world.

These markers show the tide rising for the fledgling Mennonite Church USA, and leaders across the church deserve credit for being faithful to God's calling in this new chapter of our ecclesiastical history. However, there remain some significant challenges ahead for these same leaders:

- Too many area conferences are struggling for their own viability and identity. All the energy spent creating this new denomination came at a cost to some area conferences that now are struggling to adjust their budgets—and identities—as the denominational field of gravity increases.
- The new realities of this denomination come at significant cost to individuals who worked faithfully for years in the predecessor denominations and agencies. Layoffs in Newton, Kan., and Elkhart, Ind., terminated the jobs of dozens of church agency employees. Most dramatic now is a decision by Mennonite Publishing Network to create a plan for vacating the Scottdale, Pa., facility in the next five years (page 19).
- The relationship of our new denomination to Mennonite Church Canada is confusing. At St. Louis 1999, leaders in both countries spoke of "one denomination; two-country structures." But leaders may have allowed that phrase to remain on the lips of delegates to placate those grieving the loss of their sisters and brothers in the other country. We now need leaders in both denominations to provide new language for the relationship (page 21).

God has been good to us during the 27 months since the official beginning of Mennonite Church USA. The decision to create two national denominations out of two binational denominations was the right thing to do. But some of the changes caused by that decision have been painful, and it may have felt like the church was running aground at times. Nevertheless and through it all, God's Spirit buoyed us: Our new denomination is now being lifted by God's providence and graciousness. This rising tide floats our boat.—*ejt*

The Mennonite

www.TheMennonite.org

May 4, 2004

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a cup of justice

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12 One church one family at a time

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The work of God is to believe

The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.—John 6:29 NIV

Karl McKinney, former co-pastor at Reba Place of Rogers Park in Chicago, now works for Mennonite Mission Network.

God uses the church to call all people to peace through our Lord Jesus Christ. For much of this year, however, the church in the United States will recess from God's ministry and devote its energy to electing a Democrat or a Republican to the office of President. In the subsequent four years, the losers will groan and the winners exult.

Consider the difference between what we expect to happen through the election and what will likely occur. Everyone will be exhausted. Peace will not break out. Instead, on Nov. 6 the losing party will begin a campaign to take the White House from the winners.

With all its contradictions and disappointments, politics consumes the energies of modern seekers of all stripes, just as the pursuit of food consumed the energies of the people in John 6.

Nothing is wrong with political activism and food, except they perish and do not deserve disproportionate amounts of our energy and attention. Belief in God demands one's full attention; politics and food have to follow.

It is one thing to believe in Christ personally, and a vulnerably different thing to convince one's neighbors to pursue Jesus Christ. It is easy to justify our refusal to share God's good news because of the bad and worst practices of Christian evangelists. The difficulty is to convince people of eternal things in the face of such overwhelming material bombardment.

Our neighbors' exasperation with the futility of material pursuits may wear them down to the point where they are ready to hear God's good news. Often, however, a gap between worldviews challenges Christ's followers to close the distance between church and neighbor.

I participated in a local anti-oppression group and learned that my understanding of oppression and others' understanding of oppression differ fundamentally. The more we talked, the clearer it became that we did not understand each other's worldviews. To some in our group, to proclaim God's good news as the only way people receive eternal life is itself an act of oppression.

I had to close my lips, pray and reflect on the wide divisions between the political views associated with the church (on my side) and the concerns represented by some in our group. Something greater than a political party must close that gap.

The yearning for freedom from oppression is common to all. Many of our neighbors struggle to find relief and deliverance. It appears the gap has widened between the church and her neighbors over what oppression is, who it is that oppresses people and what deliverance means.

To my neighbors, the message of deliverance from oppression has thudded to the ground. Some in our group are distanced from the church and its understanding of God's good news. Other neighbors have heard the good news and responded favorably. It is not satisfactory that while some eat and are full, others seek food that perishes, fill their minds with fruitless ideologies and place their hopes in people and parties that are perishing. I long for people to know the true freedom that comes only through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The challenge of this gap between the church and neighbors should stir us to make sure we remove every offense between them so that we present God's good news of Jesus Christ clearly.

I will not campaign for any other, advocate any party, donate to any campaign fund, attend any forum of one party to contend against another party or vote for anyone in 2004. God's solution for the oppressor and the oppressed is the one man, Jesus Christ. I reserve all my energy and hope, my labors and efforts to represent him alone. TM

TheMennonite

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Mennonite Church USA

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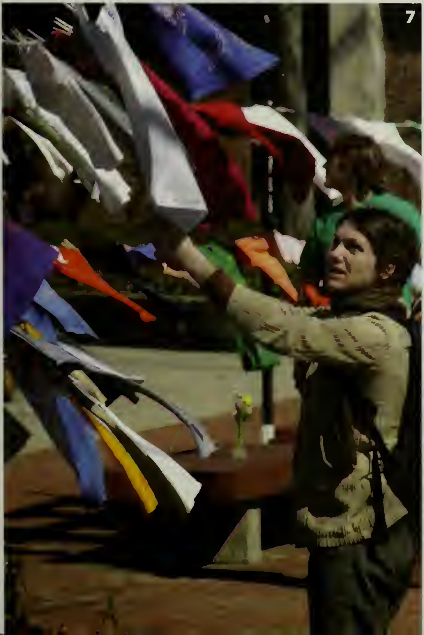

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Death and taxes

While objection to and refusal to pay that portion of one's taxes that theoretically support the military establishment may be satisfying to the objector, I see no evidence that it has been an effective strategy for making a difference ("Death and Taxes: the Unconscionable Connection," April 6). It would be more effective for all of us who profess allegiance to the gospel of Jesus to vote and cast our ballots for the candidate whose policies best reflect the gospel of Jesus as opposed to some other gospel to which our nation appears to have allegiance, as Robert Kreider said in "I Am a Conscientious Objector to This War" (March 2). If everyone in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Florida professing allegiance to the gospel of Jesus were to vote their allegiance, the disturbing issues set forth in Godshall's death and taxes article may well be seriously addressed. At the very least, we could hope for an assessment of where we are headed.—*James L. Peachey, Spring Mills, Pa.*

We believe that taxation, including the U.S. federal income tax, is both good and necessary. Such taxes, however, can be put to bad use. We believe this to be the case at present, given the massive expenditures for militarization.

As Christians and members of the Mennonite church, we object to all forms of violence. Jesus called us all to love even our enemies, to resist evil, even should it mean suffering for ourselves. He gave us an incredible example in choosing torture and death over use of the sword. Therefore, as a matter of faith, we refuse to participate in violence, either by our own conduct or by financing it through others. Just as we could not shoot another person, we cannot pay for someone to do it in our name.

The United States spends more on soldiers, weapons and debt from prior wars than any other society past or present. Roughly 53 percent of our current income taxes will be so used. Therefore, we are withholding $53 from our payment due. Obviously this is a symbolic amount, but it is a step toward fully following God's call for us. The Internal Revenue Service only carries out the instructions lawfully given it; only Congress and the president make policy for the U.S. government. Therefore we call on them to allow all Americans to make full tax payments in good conscience by passing the Peace Tax Fund bill. Our country found ways to make alternative service possible for those whose religious faith precludes military participation. We can do the same thing for our money as we do for our bodies. Allow us to pay just as much as other taxpayers, but to do so without funding violence.

We are sending the IRS the remaining $518 that we owe. We would be happy to discuss this matter with them in person or by other means. We thank the IRS and our elected officials for their service to our nation.—*Rex J. Rempel and Lenae K. Nofziger, Kirkland, Wash.*

Choosing the passion

If there is a theological crisis in Mennonite Church USA, it has nothing to do with sexuality. It has everything to do with the doctrine of atonement. I agree that substitutionary atonement is not the only way the Scriptures explain the work of Christ on the cross. But to read what many write in Readers Say and "Choosing the Passion" (April 6), substitutionary atonement is merely a medieval construct. This argument would hold some weight except that the New Testament, written before the Crusades of medieval times, clearly presents substitutionary atonement as one way to understand what Jesus did on the cross.

In *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective,* we say that Jesus' "faithfulness to death on a cross provided the way of salvation for all people." That is a much different answer than the one provided by John Troyer. What Jesus did on the cross made it possible for me to experience God's forgiveness and grace. Without Jesus' death, there is no way of salvation. Jesus was not merely a model for suffering love. Through his death and resurrection, he made a way for us back to God. How that works is the mystery that all atonement theories try to explain. No single theory captures completely what Jesus did on the cross.—*Michael Danner, Metamora, Ill.*

Re "Choosing the Passion" by John Troyer: One of the central themes that I hear is that the "satisfaction theory of atonement" has led some to rationalize the use of force and to avoid costly personal discipleship. I am not at all sure that this theory leads

IN THIS ISSUE

Perhaps you sit down with a cup of coffee when you open your copy of *The Mennonite.* Duane Stoltzfus (page 8) wants to know if it's fair-trade coffee. After visiting Salvadoran farmers with a group from Goshen (Ind.) College in January, he is convinced that Mennonite congregations can help these growers make a living wage by buying their coffee directly. As we celebrate Christian Family Sunday on May 9, Leslie Homer-Cattell helps us consider Bridge of Hope (page 12), a ministry that brings together churches and homeless women and children. Anton Flores helps us consider "Just Adoptions" (page 15). We are pleased to be recognized by our peers in the Associated Church Press with six awards (page 7).—*Editors* in that direction. It may well be that this understanding of Christ's work on earth freed people to lay down their lives for others. But our need is not to come up with an explanation that achieves a result that we deem correct. Our need is to know the truth.

Unless we want to cut out portions of Isaiah, the epistles, and the Last Supper, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that we deserved to die and that somehow Jesus' death makes it possible for us to have a relationship with God that was not possible apart from his death. Even if God were always ready and free to forgive, we were constitutionally unable to give up our own willfulness and either ask for or accept God's forgiveness (until the old self dies with Jesus).

It is true that Jesus' sacrificial laying down of his life is also the model that we are to follow. But if it is only an example, then it trivializes what happened. It also does not explain the results. A good example—even a very sacrificial one—is easily ignored by most people at most times.—*Doug Baker, Goshen, Ind.*

Modernists and postmodernists

It may surprise Everett J. Thomas ("A Flesh-and-blood Easter Church," April 6) to learn that there are many of us modernists and postmodernists who joyfully participate in the Lord's Supper. To be modernists does not mean we only accept what science can prove. Rather, it means we accept science for what it can do and accept its silence in areas like religion and ethics.

Similarly, postmodernism does not require the relegation of Communion to the dustbin of history. Postmodernism only asks that we understand where Communion came from and that it is part of a tradition not shared by many in the world such as Jews and Muslims. Postmodernism seeks to protect us from a religious certainty that in the not so distant past allowed the execution of people who had "wrong" beliefs and "wrong" Communion practices.—*Mitchell Brown, Wilmette, Ill.*

Honest dissent not appreciated

Thanks for the March 2 editorial "Bottom-line Questions." Church organizations should be open about their financial situations. Recently several of us who served on the Mennonite Church (MC) General Board from 1988 to 1995 were visiting and discovered that none of us was aware of the Mennonite Publishing House debt problems at that time. So we did not ask the right, hard questions.

The MC General Board did not always operate by consensus, and that may have been a contributing factor in not asking hard questions. The September 2002 *Harvard Business Review* article "What Makes a Great Board Great" says, "If a group suppresses honest dissent, they'll likely end up with board members that conform but will be unable to steer clear of looming hazards."

I felt honest dissent was not appreciated on the MC General Board, which may have contributed to the MPH problem.—*Dean Swartzendruber, Kalona, Iowa*

Applause inappropriate in worship

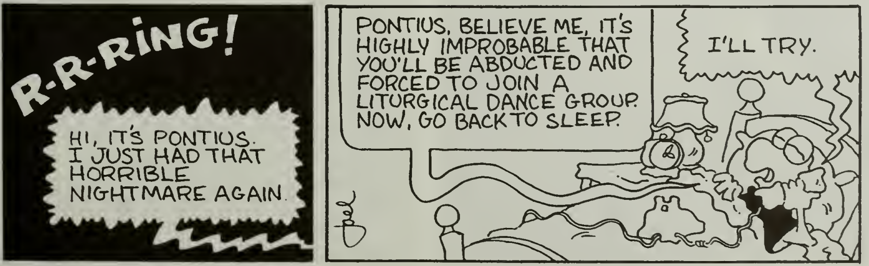
After reading "Reflections of a Youth Convention Survivor" by Laura Richards (Speaking Out, Feb. 3) I was prompted to write since I could not say Amen and have her hear it. Two statements were outstanding: "Music-induced hearing loss is preventable. Just turn down the volume" and, "When we honor speakers, let's hold the applause until the end, then clap for all of them." Holding the applause goes for singing, too. Let's remember that at a worship service we are worshiping God, not men. To applaud seems out of place. It turns the worship into a concert, and there is a difference.

It was encouraging to read that youth like to sing hymns, too. A few years ago the person planning the worship in our congregation contacted the youth and asked what they prefer to sing; everyone suggested hymns, not choruses.

Keep up the good work, Laura, and may you survive the next convention, too.—*Florence Voegtlin, Tofield, Alberta*

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


R-R-RING!
HI, IT'S PONTIUS. I JUST HAD THAT HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE AGAIN.
PONTIUS, BELIEVE ME, IT'S HIGHLY IMPROBABLE THAT YOU'LL BE ABDUCTED AND FORCED TO JOIN A LITURGICAL DANCE GROUP. NOW, GO BACK TO SLEEP.
I'LL TRY.

IN BRIEF

Former Jesuit turns Anabaptist

MADRID, Spain—Through the Burgos Mennonite Church's Web site, Antonio Gonzalez came in contact with Dennis Byler, long-term worker for Mennonite Mission Network in Spain. A former Jesuit, Gonzales was rebaptized at the Brethren in Christ Church in Madrid as an adult, following his growing understanding of Anabaptism. His book *Reinado de Dios e Imperio* (*Kingdom of God and Empire*), published in 2003, has sparked excitement in the Anabaptist community in Spain. Mennonite Mission Network is providing funds for Gonzalez to teach at Seminario Evangélico Unido de Teología (United Protestant Theological Seminary).

Latin American women plan steps

With the support of the Mennonite World Conference Global Gift Sharing program, Alix Lozano of Colombia and Ofelia García of Mexico are organizing Latin American women with theological training, current theological students and women leaders in the church. The next step will be regional or national gatherings.—*MWC*

U.S. Marines 'massacre' Iraqis

BAGHDAD—Iraqi doctors and international volunteers assisting Doctors Without Borders entered Fallujah April 10 in a bus loaded with medical supplies from agencies in Baghdad, reported Le Anne Clausen of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) in Iraq on April 13. The city had been under siege for six days.

Hospital workers reported 518 Iraqis killed by U.S. fire as of April 11, including at least 157 women and 146 children. Of the children, 100 were under age 12, and of those, 46 were under age 5. More than 1,200 had been wounded.

Jo Wilding, a volunteer helping evacuate wounded, said, "This was a massacre, and it will get worse."

CPT workers offered to go to Fallujah but learned that Doctors Without Borders is only accepting Iraqi volunteers because Iraqi militant groups are targeting internationals and their presence might actually endanger injured patients.—*CPT*

CPT and MCC workers leave Iraq for Jordan

CHICAGO and AKRON, Pa.—Christian Peacemaker Teams' Iraq team and the CPT delegation left Iraq April 14 on the advice of their Iraqi coworkers. Both team and delegation are in Amman, Jordan.

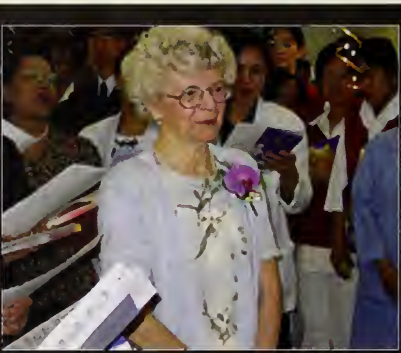
The aggressive actions of the U.S. and Coalition Forces throughout Iraq and especially in Fallujah have created widespread suspicion and fear of the intentions of these foreign armies, reports CPT. This suspicion puts all internationals at risk.

Also in Amman is Peter Dula, Mennonite Central Committee's worker in Iraq. He will remain there while MCC administrators assess the security situation in Iraq. Dula, most recently of Durham, N.C., hopes to return to Baghdad, where he teaches seminary students at Babel College of Philosophy and Theology.—*CPT and MCC News Service*

Vada Snider

National champion

Jeremy Schrag, a senior from Moundridge, Kan., at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., took first in Persuasive Speaking at the American Forensics Association National Individual Events Tournament April 2-5 at California State University at Long Beach. A senior communication arts major, he won over 155 competitors, including ones from Division I public and private colleges and universities. His speech argued against the FDA's approval of Human Growth Hormone for nonmedical use.



Mennonite Mission Network photo by Sheldon Sawatzky

Mission worker honored at Taiwan hospital

Mennonite Christian Hospital nurses honor Susan Martens Kehler with a song during the dedication of the Susan Martens (Kehler) Nursing Education Center March 25 in Hualien, Taiwan. Susan first came to Taiwan as a mission worker in 1957 and served as director of nursing there from 1974 to 1980.

British Columbia Mennonites agree to wait

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.—Mennonite Church British Columbia held a special delegate session March 13 to address three motions from its executive.

The first motion called for "an 18-month time of discernment with Mennonite Church Canada to actively address the concern about the perceived growing acceptance of homosexual practice within our wider church body, in order to lay a foundation for a stronger partnership." Delegates voted 88 percent in favor of the motion.

The second motion, which passed by 90 percent, addressed the concern that the church's ongoing ministry not be neglected while dealing with homosexuality.

The third motion, which also passed by 88 percent, committed the conference to two seminars, one dealing with the church's understanding of homosexuality, the other with church governance.

The session concluded with a service releasing Kelowna Gospel Fellowship from membership in the conference.—*Canadian Mennonite*

Mennonite Women USA sponsors retreats

Mennonite Women USA and Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., cosponsored "Women in Conversation" retreats April 2-4 in Wichita, Kan., and April 16-18 at Laurelville.

"This new way of working with Laurelville—in settings outside Pennsylvania—enabled us to more easily include women from both east and west," said Mennonite Women USA executive director Rhoda Keener. "Both organizations have a mission to serve Mennonite Church USA, not just one region."

Brenda Martin Hurst of Harrisonburg, Va., keynote speaker at both events, emphasized the active ways women can seek out and experience wholeness in every aspect of life, through the power of God's Spirit. Retreat highlights included structured conversation circles and a laugh-until-your-sides-hurt "Zany Aunt" dress-up dinner.—*Cathleen Hockman-Wert*

Rhoda Keener

Linda Welty (left), Lakewood, Colo., converses with Melba Martin, Goshen, Ind., at the Wichita, Kan., "Women in Conversation" retreat, the first held west of the Mississippi.

The Mennonite wins six awards at ACP

TORONTO—*The Mennonite* won six awards at the annual meeting of Associated Church Press, held here April 18-21. Entries were from 2003 issues.

Duane Stoltzfus' article on Mary Oyer, "Still Turning to 606" (Nov. 18) won an award of merit (second place) for biographical profile.

Winning honorable mention (third place) were "Police Action or War?" by Everett J. Thomas (Jan. 7)for editorial courage, "Of Whitewash and War" by Kathryn Kingsbury (Jan. 7) for feature article, "The Baby Screaming in the Back Seat" by Julia Kasdorf (March 4) for poetry, "Four Spiritual Truths of a Peacemaking God" by J. Nelson Kraybill (Nov. 4) for theological reflection and a photo by Matthew Lester (Dec. 16, page 20) for photo illustration.

Rosemarie Freeney Harding dies

Rosemarie Freeney Harding, a teacher, activist, social worker, counselor and writer, died March 1 at age 74 of complications from diabetes.

An alum of Goshen (Ind.) College, Rosemarie and Vincent, her husband, were involved in the freedom movement in the South and cofounded the Veterans of Hope Project, recording the stories of leading figures from the civil rights movement and other freedom struggles.

Rosemarie Harding

Airing dirty laundry

Rachel Eisenstat, a sophomore from Waynesburg, Pa., walks through an outdoor exhibit of 172 decorated T-shirts that were part of the first annual Clothesline Project display at Goshen (Ind.) College April 2-3, a nationwide campaign to raise awareness about violence against women. The T-shirts, with messages of hope and healing as well as great pain, were made in the prior months by campus and community members who have been affected directly or indirectly by domestic and sexual violence.

IN BRIEF

LEAP of faith

LEAP, or Learning, Experiencing and Participating, is an initiative of Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va., that provides practical opportunities for seminary faculty to engage high school students in exploring theology, pastoral ministry and cross-cultural exchange. Last July, 50 high school students and 13 adult leaders attended the Global Youth Summit at the Mennonite World Conference in Zimbabwe through LEAP. This summer up to 50 high school students will study with seminary professors and others at the EMS campus July 15-16. Afterward, from July 26 to Aug. 7, the students will take field excursions to Indonesia, Nicaragua, Trinidad or New York City.—*EMU News Service*

Dirty air

More than half the U.S. population lives in or around areas that violate clean air standards, according to a list released April 15 by the Environmental Protection Agency. About 500 counties violate or contribute to violations of ground-level ozone, more than double the number listed under older standards, the report says. Ground-level ozone, which is odorless and invisible, is a major component of smog on hot summer days. Prolonged exposure causes the equivalent of sunburn to the lungs. —*New York Times*

A cup of

justice

By buying fair-trade coffee, Mennonite congregations can help poor coffee growers earn a living wage.

by Duane Stoltzfus

By the time the Sunday morning fellowship coffee is brewed in Mennonite churches across the country, Jose Antonio Garcia Mendoza is several hours into a day of harvesting beans at a coffee cooperative in the western mountains of El Salvador.

Seven mornings a week he rises before dawn, eats a breakfast of corn tortillas and beans and begins to walk the rutted dirt road from his home in Tacuba to the coffee cooperative, Las Colinas. An hour later he is ready to join the harvest crew.

There, on the steep hillsides accessible by narrow foot paths, dozens of men and women pick the red fruit known as cherries from branches of coffee plants. The cherries, each of which contains two beans, are dropped into baskets, then poured into sacks holding 100 pounds or more, sacks that are slung over backs and carried to waiting trucks along the road.

This is the stretch of the coffee chain in which the work is hard, very hard—or, as Garcia Mendoza says, “muy duro.”

Back at the processing plant in Las Colinas, the beans are removed from the fleshy red outer covering, fermented, washed and laid out on terraces to dry. The beans will be trucked to port, shipped to New York City and roasted at a plant near Boston.

In this way, the beans plucked by Garcia Mendoza will come to bear the Equal Exchange label “Fellowship Blend,”

The beans plucked by Garcia Mendoza will come to bear the Equal Exchange label “Fellowship Blend,” a percolator coffee popular in churches, or maybe the label “Café Salvador,” found in homes across North America.

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

a percolator coffee popular in churches, or maybe the label "Café Salvador," found in homes across North America.

Cheap instant coffee: It's doubtful Garcia Mendoza himself will ever taste the "Fellowship Blend" or "Café Salvador." Given the depressed prices on the world coffee market, he is lucky to be able to afford to serve a visitor cheap instant coffee, watered down and heavily sweetened. At home, a coffee grower lowers his expectations.

World market prices for coffee, among the most heavily traded of commodities, dropped from a high of $2.50 per pound in 1997 to a low of 45 cents in 2001. As of mid-February, the market rate was 75 cents per pound.

"Fair-trade" coffee operates outside the usual channels of payment and distribution. Fair-trade companies such as Equal Exchange are committed to building direct, long-term partnerships with coffee growers and to paying what is termed a living wage.

A company that wants to carry the fair-trade label must meet several certification conditions set by TransFair USA of Oakland, Calif., including a commitment to pay at least $1.26 per pound for conventionally grown beans and $1.41 per pound for organic coffee.

As of January, 81 Mennonite and Brethren in Christ congregations and groups had signed up with MCC's U.S. Coffee Project, agreeing to serve fair-trade coffee.

Equal Exchange, a worker-owned organization founded in 1986, ranks as the largest supplier of fair-trade coffee, with about 30 percent of that market. Equal Exchange buys directly from small farmers in El Salvador and elsewhere, many of whom were one-time landless peasants who received parcels through agrarian reform.

As a percentage of the overall coffee market, fair trade remains a modest enterprise: about 10 million pounds of the 2.8 billion pounds imported, or one-third of 1 percent, according to Equal Exchange. But the fair-trade volume has nearly doubled each year: in 1999, 2 million pounds; in 2000, 4 million pounds; in 2001, 6.5 million; in 2002, 10 million.

One of Equal Exchange's partners in the fair-trade coffee endeavor is Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), which last July began officially promoting what it calls "a cup of justice."

Through the MCC U.S. Coffee Project, cosponsored by Ten Thousand Villages and MMA, Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches are encouraged to purchase and serve fair-trade coffee, whether for fellowship time on Sundays or for breakfast in the homes of church members during the week.

As of January, 81 Mennonite and Brethren in Christ congregations and groups had signed up with MCC's U.S. Coffee Project, agreeing to serve fair-trade coffee.

Pennsylvania led all states with the highest number of participating churches and organizations, 15, followed by Indiana with 14; Virginia, 9; New York and Ohio, 6; and Kansas and Illinois, 5.

Congregations can purchase fair-trade coffee at Ten Thousand Villages stores or directly from Equal Exchange at wholesale prices.

Martin Shupack, legislative associate for international affairs in the MCC U.S. Washington Office, says some congregations may be purchasing fair-trade coffee through other suppliers and so have not yet been counted—indeed some congregations may not even know that MCC is keeping a list.

Fellowship hour coffee: That would be true for College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., which began serving fair-trade coffee in the fall of 2002. The church purchases its fellowship hour coffee from Level Ground Trading in British Columbia.

"If you purchase fair-trade coffee, please let us know," Martin says. Churches who are added to the MCC list (posted on the agency's Web site at www.mcc.org/us/washington/coffee/) will receive a packet of information on fair-trade coffee as well as periodic updates via email. The list is also the best measure, he says, of churchwide contribution.

"Congregations can directly help coffee farmers by buying fair-trade coffee," Martin says. "It's also a hands-on way of learning about trade issues and injustices, and lays the groundwork for doing policy advocacy.

"Fair trade can only go so far," he says. "It probably can't help 25 million coffee farmers in the world; the market for fair trade is not that large. But it can be a way for congregations to learn about the farmers' plight, to help some farmers and to advocate for change."

All's fair in coffee: The author smells coffee grown by Salvadoran farmers.

"We see a huge potential for the interfaith program," said Anna Utech, coordinator of Equal Exchange's interfaith coffee program. "People of faith are looking for ways to live out their faith in their daily lives, and by an act as simple as purchasing fair-trade coffee they can participate in creating a more just global economy."

In January, a group of faculty members and students from Goshen College participated in an Equal Exchange interfaith delegation to El Salvador. Together with Presbyterian and Methodist church members, the Goshen group visited several coffee cooperatives, including Las Colinas.

When the delegation arrived at Las Colinas, the coffee growers gathered in a social hall to welcome the guests and introduce themselves. Julio Asenso Garcia, one of the workers, rose to speak:

"I want you to feel like we are all part of one family, the family united in Christ. ... And I want to thank God for having brought us together so that you all can go to the United States and sell our product, which is very important, because there are many other cooperatives just like us that also need to have their product sold. And if we don't sell our products [to you], we are forced to sell them for the very low prices that are being given on the market today and will never be able to get out of debt.

> **Thanks to God, we have the privilege of being poor. And we are poor, but with a lot of faith, huge faith in God.**
> —Julio Asenso Garcia

"I pray that God will move the hearts of the rich, the ones that he decided to make rich and so that they would understand our plight. Thanks to God, we have the privilege of being poor. And we are poor, but with a lot of faith, huge faith in God. He has made all the earth, all the land and all the sea and the sky. And someday we will perhaps be together. Right now maybe we cannot walk together side by side, but perhaps someday we will walk together side by side in heaven."

Duane Stoltzfus teaches journalism and communication at Goshen (Ind.) College.

Interfaith coffee: Mennonites are not alone in drinking fair-trade coffee. Through its interfaith coffee program, Equal Exchange struck its first denominational partnership in 1997, with Lutheran World Relief. Since then, partnerships have been added with the American Friends Service Committee, Brethren Witness, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and the United Methodist Committee on Relief. Last fall Catholic Relief Services signed on as well. The United Church of Christ was scheduled to join the interfaith network in March.

Some 8,424 congregations and faith organizations nationwide purchased 320,024 pounds of fair-trade coffee from Equal Exchange in 2003, about 20 percent of Equal Exchange's total sales.

Lutherans led the way with 3,676 participating congregations and 147,702 pounds purchased, followed by Presbyterians with 1,554 congregations and 82,897 pounds. The Methodists ranked third in the number of congregations involved (724), but Unitarians (502 congregations) drank more coffee (41,838 pounds) than the Methodists (31,970 pounds).

one church one family at a time

Bridge of Hope helps churches learn to mentor homeless women and children.

by Leslie Homer-Cattell

Michele Beamer will be lovingly catered to this Mother's Day. There may be a potted marigold or two from her sons' Sunday school classes at Hinkletown Mennonite Church in Ephrata, Pa. Her husband will probably cook dinner at their twin home with the big maple tree in the front yard. Her youngest son—just 5 months old—will likely be content nursing as usual.

> I couldn't believe that these people who had families and lives would take their time for me.
> —Michele Beamer

But 10 years ago, life was different. Beamer was 23 and living in a transitional housing program for young single mothers. She was yearning to be on her own and make a stable home for herself and her toddler.

"Derek was 6 months old when we moved into the shelter," says Michele. "While I was there, I earned a degree in medical office procedures and got a job at a hospital. My time at the shelter was ending and I was ready to move on with my life. But I was afraid.

"It was getting colder and I didn't have a car. I was walking a couple miles—with my child—to the babysitter and then to work. How could I get around to look for an apartment? What if I messed up and made the wrong decision about where to live? During my counseling session at the shelter, I saw a flier about Bridge of Hope and decided to give them a call."

Beamer applied and was accepted into Bridge of Hope, a program that uses a three-way partnership model between one homeless or at-risk single mother, one trained church-based mentoring group and professional staff. She met weekly with a case manager to talk about budgeting and parenting issues and set short- and long-term goals.

And she was introduced to 12 strangers from Hinkletown Mennonite.

"When I first met some of my mentors at Friendly's; they were so nice to Derek and me," says Michele. "I told them I was worried about moving to a different place. How would I get to work and pick up my son? But they had it all figured out—they had found someone to donate a car to me and said they would take me to work for the next two weeks until it was ready. I felt such relief when I heard that. I sat and cried."

Her only possessions were clothing, a crib, a bed and a dresser. So her mentors collected furniture and household goods and went to auctions to find a washer and dryer. On moving day they cleaned the apartment, helped carry everything in and provided babysitting for Derek.

"They had it all lined up," says Michele. "It reminds me of how God knows exactly all our worries and concerns and provides for them."

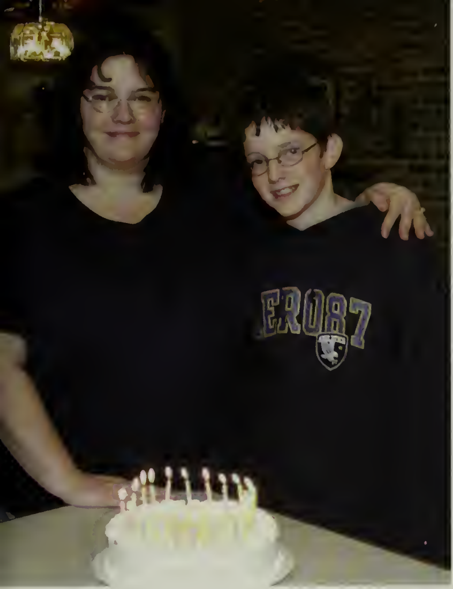
Michele settled into her new home, but as life became more stable she became more guarded with her mentors. They act like they love me, but they really don't, she thought. She even started avoiding their phone calls.

"I was grateful, but it was overwhelming," she says. "I couldn't believe that these people who had families and lives would take their time for me. I thought they were going to love me and leave me like my biological father did.

"But they just didn't give up on me!" Michele says. "They told me, 'We care about you and we're not going anywhere.' They continued to show that love in so many different ways—they included us in holiday parties and vacations. And they let me know that they had problems, too—financial issues, children who are naughty sometimes. They showed me that their lives were no different from mine. I thought, OK, this is real."

Barb Martin—one of Michele's mentors then and a close friend now—remembers her own learning curve. "As Michele and I got to know each other better, I felt that we developed a close relationship," she says. "I was able to listen when she needed to talk. But even though she asked our advice and opinions, she didn't necessarily always follow it. I learned that God needs to guide and direct each of us and that we can't make decisions for others even when we think that would be best."

Bridge of Hope photos by Neville Grinner



Overwhelming: Michele Beamer and her son Derek celebrate their birthdays, which are four days apart.

Breaking the cycle of poverty and homelessness: Michele's relationship with Barb and her other mentors is just what Linda Witmer and Sandy Lewis had in mind. This public health nurse and women's shelter director faced the limitations of social service programs daily as they saw families stuck in a cycle of poverty and homelessness. They dreamed of connecting homeless single mothers with the church and helping them find long-term solutions to the problems they faced.

With the support of their church, Sandy Hill Mennonite in Coatesville, Pa., Sandy and Linda shared their dream at a meeting on March 2, 1987. Thirty-seven people from a cross-section of Christian faiths were there to hear three homeless mothers share their stories. They wanted to explore ways the church community in Lancaster and Chester counties (Pennsylvania) might make a difference in the lives of families like these.

"There was a strong sense of hope and optimism at that meeting," says Andy Leatherman, Sandy Hill's pastor at the time. "What gripped people was the idea that churches could be involved in meeting these needs. Many of us had the story of the sheep and the goats on our mind. That was the theological underpinning—Jesus' words to help the poor and love others. This was not about 'rescuing' people, it was more about simply loving them."

Bridge of Hope was incorporated in October 1987. Larry Zook, a member of East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa., now and a student in the MBA program at Eastern College at the time, served an internship as the start-up facilitator in 1988. The first mother and her child were matched with a mentoring group in1989.

Bridge of Hope's first board of directors included members representing Brethren, Catholic, Episcopal, Mennonite and Presbyterian churches.

"We realized that we needed a wider base than just our own denomination," says Andy. "We offered truck loads of prayers and saw the Spirit of God leading people with commitment to this right from the start."

Word spreads: After just three years, people from outside Lancaster and Chester counties began inquiring about Bridge of Hope's ministry model. The first calls were from Pittsburgh, Pa., and Marlton, N.J. Would Bridge of Hope help connect churches with homeless single mothers in those communities?

The phone kept ringing. Bridge of Hope's board formed an affiliate committee. By the time the national office was launched in 2002, Bridge of Hope had received inquiries from people in more than 25 states.

"Bridge of Hope is a new approach to a problem as old as civilization," says Edgar Stoesz, a member of Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church, who completed his term as the first chair of Bridge of Hope National Office in March. "This is a paradigm that has been proven to be of value not only for the women but for the churches, too. When someone says, 'I feel so bad, but I don't know what to do,' Bridge of Hope gives them handles to help them know how to respond."

The mission of Bridge of Hope National Office is

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Life-changing: Barb Martin (left) and Michele Beamer in Barb's living room

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to call and equip Christians to create local affiliates that engage churches in a life-changing mentoring ministry with homeless women and children. A complete mentor-training program, as well as operational manuals and on-site training for affiliate boards and staff, help new Bridge of Hope ministries get a solid start. Affiliates are encouraged to put down strong Christian roots and draw on the best practices in nonprofit management.

Currently there are five Bridge of Hope affiliates located in Pennsylvania and Ohio. Other groups in Johnstown (Pa.), St. Louis, Lukfin (Texas), and Atlanta are actively discerning whether God is calling them to launch a Bridge of Hope in their communities.

"The impact mentors can have on the lives of one mom and her children is tremendous," says Edith Yoder, executive director of Bridge of Hope National Office and a member of Frazer (Pa.) Mennonite Church. "Before Michele and her son met her mentoring group, their lives could have gone in a different direction. [Due to] the love of supportive friends, Michele brought Derek up in the church. People in his life love and care for him. He can count on his mom to provide a home for him."

'Those people' turned into 'my neighbor': The desire to impact the lives of homeless and at-risk families was at the heart of the informational meeting for what would become Bridge of Hope BuxMont. Founded in 2000, it now serves families in Bucks and Montgomery (Pa.) counties.

Caring for those struggling with poverty is a clear mandate that Jesus lived and taught. Bridge of Hope is such a tangible way of living out Christian faith. It's the real thing.—Cheryl Swartley

"A number of us had become more aware of homelessness in our back yard. It wasn't just 'those people' who were homeless; we were beginning to say 'my neighbor' and we wanted to become more connected," says Walter Sawatsky, the director of Collaborative Ministries and a conference minister in Franconia Conference. "It became clear we had enough energy and passion among us to start organizing. To us it was a God thing."

Walter, who served on the group's steering committee and the first board of directors, remembers a variety of gifts among the founding group. Some were skilled with finances, others in relational ministries; some were big picture people, others strong administrative leaders.

"We were blessed with the right combination of gifts almost from the beginning," he says. "We never even thought about how much work there was—it had to be done."

Bridge of Hope BuxMont hired Executive Director Cheryl Swartley in 2001 and began accepting families into the program within a few months. Among the first nine churches to mentor a family so far are Souderton Mennonite, Line Lexington Mennonite, Zion Mennonite and Plains Mennonite. Over a dozen other Mennonite churches have supported the program financially, and six of BuxMont's 14 board members are Mennonite.

But addressing poverty crosses denominational lines, according to Cheryl, a member of Blooming Glen Mennonite. She reports that other board members represent Baptist, Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ and independent churches.

"Caring for those struggling with poverty is a clear mandate that Jesus lived and taught," Cheryl says. "Bridge of Hope is such a tangible way of living out Christian faith. It's the real thing."

Since the founding of Bridge of Hope Lancaster and Chester Counties, this three-way partnership model has been tested and refined. More than 175 homeless and at-risk mothers and almost 300 children have been matched with trained, church-based mentoring groups through Bridge of Hope affiliates. And other families are on a journey from homelessness to wholeness right now.

'I'm a success story': Michele describes herself as a success story. After graduating from Bridge of Hope, she went on to buy the house where she now lives. She became a member of Hinkletown Mennonite in 1994 and in 1998 married Austin Beamer. Now Derek has three young brothers. He goes to Lititz (Pa.) Mennonite School and enjoys playing basketball. He is being raised in a strong Christian community.

"During my time in Bridge of Hope I grew a lot spiritually. I learned without a shadow of a doubt that the piece missing in my life was Jesus Christ," says Michele. "At first I felt a little uncomfortable as a single mother going into a Mennonite church. I wondered, What will they think of me? But I was welcomed with open arms."

It's a story Yoder has seen over and over again as Bridge of Hope matches homeless single mothers with Protestant and Catholic churches.

"There is a broadness in what God is doing that is very powerful and unifying," Edith says. "When the current mentoring groups and mothers gather for a meal and training on Bridge of Hope nights, I often marvel at the racial, denominational and theological diversity I see. This is what the kingdom of God looks like."

Leslie Homer-Cattell lives in Honey Brook, Pa.

Ethics and international adoption

by Anton Flores

Just adoptions

My eldest son, Jairo, is a joy to his parents. He's creative like his father, sensitive like his mother and energetic like all 5-year-old boys. But Jairo was not born into our family. The youngest of three children born in the highlands of Guatemala, Jairo joined our family in 2000.

Adopting Jairo was a transformational experience for my wife and me, the result of several years of deliberation and prayer. The concept of adoption resonates with our Christian faith. Scripture clearly paints a picture of believers being adopted into the family of God, and adopting a child struck us as a calling from God. We felt God was leading us to have both biological and adopted children and that adoption was a perfect way to merge spiritual obedience and social justice. However, living a God-honoring life is not without its complication.

It wasn't until we had already committed to adopting Jairo and our bond to him was formed that we learned of the existence of a vocal community of activists opposed to international adoptions of children from countries like Guatemala.

The number of families from industrialized countries adopting children from primarily less-industrialized countries is growing at an astronomical rate. In 1992, U.S. families adopted 6,472 children from foreign lands, and a decade later the numbers swelled to 20,099.

Leslie Doty Hollingsworth, associate professor of social work at the University of Michigan, contends that international adoptions are the result of social injustice and directly benefit families from industrialized nations. In her article "International Adoption Among Families in the United States: Considerations of Social Justice" (*Social Work*, April 2003), Hollingsworth describes the historical development of international adoptions from various factors, including wars, poverty, the fall of Communism and oppressive governmental policies.

With a rapid increase in adoption rates, we must do all that we can to ensure that we are not just perpetuating the unjust structures that create orphans. International adoption has become big business in countries such as Guatemala. If people continue to demand Guatemalan children, a supply will be found—regardless of ethics or law. The average annual income in Guatemala is only $1,640, and the income of women in urban Guatemala is only 55 percent of men's. When the typical adoption in that country costs about $24,000, the enticement for wrongdoing is strong, and the ground for corruption is fertile.

Guatemalan children allegedly have been bought from their birth mothers for as little as $300 by exploitive adoption professionals. For years international human rights organizations have decried the inhumanities that poor Guatemalan families have had to endure while Guatemalan officials (real or alleged) involved in the adoption "business" amass wealth by manipulating the misery of a largely indigenous community. Approximately 200 attorneys in Guatemala work in the field of adoption, resulting in a $60 million-per-year business for these attorneys. With 98 percent of all Guatemalan adoptees going to international families, skeptics refer to that country's children as one of its most valuable exports.

> The number of families from industrialized countries adopting children from primarily less-industrialized countries is growing at an astronomical rate.

In view of these facts, can international adoption ever be ethical? Can an adoption from a country such as Guatemala—the third most popular country for Americans seeking to adopt (after China and

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Russia) and one that provides the greatest number of children per capita for adoption in the United States—ever meet the standards of a justice-loving Christian?

A child becomes an orphan largely because of structural evils that our global society refuses to address. Civil and international wars, famines, corrupt governments, the subjugation of women and children and pure greed are all complicit. International adoptees are in large part the result of the exploitation of the world's poorest families, and some come to our homes via the despicable practices of child abduction and trafficking.

International adoptees are in large part the result of the exploitation of the world's poorest families, and some come to our homes via the despicable practices of child abduction and trafficking.

Should Christians abandon the notion of adopting a child internationally? I suggest that a way exists to bring together the macro-perspective advocates, who insist upon eradicating institutional social ills, and those who hold the micro-perspective, that adoption rescues a child from what would likely be a life of abject poverty in a substandard orphanage. That way is through the promotion of ethical adoptions.

Here are concrete ways prospective families can ensure they are engaging in an ethical adoption.

Preadoption

Select the best agency possible: First, contact the state licensing office in each of the states where this agency is licensed and inquire about any complaints filed against this agency. Ask how long the agency has been licensed in that state. To find the corresponding licensing agencies, go to the Web site of the National Adoption Information Clearinghouse (http://www.calib.com/naic).

Second, contact the Better Business Bureau in the state where your agency is located and see if any complaints have been filed against it there.

Third, use the Internet to investigate. Join online discussion groups with others seeking to adopt, both from your agency and from the country you are considering. This provides not only wonderful support throughout the process but also insider information on possible problems you may encounter. Every agency will have problems, but one should consider the frequency and severity of the problems that come to your attention.

Finally, do not assume that just because an agency calls itself "Christian" it operates in an ethical fashion. Above all, adoptive parents should want to know that the child they now claim as their own has arrived in as ethical and legal a manner as possible. While these steps may seem cumbersome, consider it a labor of love.

Consult with your home country's embassy, located in your prospective child's country. Ask the agencies you are considering to provide you with the names and contact information of the foreign staff you will be relying on to complete the adoption process in their country; most specifically get the name and contact information of your foreign attorney. Contact the unit responsible for issuing visas in your country's embassy and share with them the name of the attorney who potentially will be representing you in that country's adoption process. While the embassy cannot share detailed information or recommend an attorney, they should be able to tell you if they have received complaints or if they have concerns about the indicated attorney. If so, you should seek another

Photos: ArtToday inc. Fo[illegible]

attorney and possibly another agency.

Learn about the sociopolitical realities of your prospective child's country. Acknowledge that adoption is more than a transaction between a family and a child and that it also means the adoption of the child's culture and country of origin. Learn about the conditions that have led to the creation of orphans in your prospective child's country. What are the realities of children and women living in that country?

Postadoption

Regularly contribute to an economic-development organization in your child's country. An ethical adoption is one that understands the complexities of our global existence and the creation of orphans from both a micro- and macro-perspective. All of us living in the wealthiest nations should consider our obligation to our poorer neighbors; however, I believe an extra responsibility befalls those of us who adopt a child from one of those poor countries. As adoptive families we must do what we can to reduce the number of orphans in our child's native country; in Guatemala alone there are approximately 200,000.

To apply this concept, my wife and I have implemented some new actions into our family life. First, through World Vision we sponsor a little boy from Guatemala who is the same age as Jairo. Doing this not only enables our son to grow up with a pen pal from his homeland whom he will one day visit, it also allows us to help a child remain with his family while receiving quality health care, education and spiritual formation.

Second, we purchase only fair-trade coffee (see page 8) from Guatemalan cooperatives to ensure that the women and children who work the fields receive a greater share of the profits.

Finally, I have worked with Central American Study and Service, a program of the Latin American Anabaptist Seminary in Guatemala City, to create an immersion tour for adoptive families that explores the economic and human rights issues affecting its children. By seeking to be a tool for economic development in the developing country of your child's origin you may find yourself being a prophetic voice for God's shalom.

Keep your child connected to her homeland. In addition to travel, decorate your child's room with authentic articles from her birth country. Read to your child books, folk tales, legends and other stories that originate in her country. Fill your home with the traditional and contemporary music of that country.

> By seeking to be a tool for economic development in the developing country of your child's origin you may find yourself being a prophetic voice for God's shalom.

Befriend not only other adoptive families but also individuals and families from your child's home country. Many adoptive families seek other adoptive families to build friendships. But don't stop there—seek other families of the same ethnic background as your child. Ethnic churches are a great place to start.

In conclusion, adoption can be a wonderful gift both to children and families. Indeed, adoption is at the heart of who God is. But why stop there? We should all seek to elevate our current adoption industry by promoting ethical adoptions.

Anton Flores teaches social work at La Grange (Ga.) College and is involved in helping plant a Mennonite congregation in La Grange.

Gnosticism, sex and postmodern philosophy

What do you know?

by Gordon Houser

Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.
—1 Corinthians 8:1b

Greetings come in all shapes and sizes. Years ago I worked with a guy who greeted me with, "What do you know for sure?" I thought up different answers. I often said, "Not much," which dismissed the question while actually stating the truth. Once I said, "Two plus two equals four." (Although in base three it equals 11.) Another time I gathered my courage and said, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made," quoting Psalm 139 and trying to bear witness to my faith.

Trouble was, this guy was just saying hello. My knowledge didn't matter much to him. How I treated him was likely a different matter.

I'm all with Paul in chastising those Corinthians. But I get uncomfortable as I realize I share some of their foibles.

Those familiar with the Enneagram—a tool for understanding one's personality, including one's strengths and weaknesses—will know something about me when I tell you I'm a five. You will know, for example, that I'm drawn to knowledge. The need to know things is both my strength and my weakness. It helps me be curious about people and understand them better but at the same time want to withdraw from them so that I can get to know other things.

Know-it-alls can be good sources for information, but no one likes them. To most people they're stuck up, pretentious. To other know-it-alls they're also competition.

When Paul wrote to the church in Corinth (at least the first of his letters that we have), he had to deal with know-it-alls. These people were proud of what (and who) they knew. Some were members of the Paul party; others belonged to the Apollos party, the Cephas party or the Christ party (1 Corinthians 1:12).

Gnosticism: Their attraction to knowledge may have had something to do with Gnosticism (from the Greek word "gnosis," meaning knowledge), which emphasized secret knowledge. Paul points out to them that such knowledge is not all it's cracked up to be. He writes that God has made foolish the wisdom of the world (1:20b).

Throughout this letter Paul mocks their "knowledge." He uses the refrain, "Do you not know?" (perhaps better translated, "You know, don't you?"), then shows how their knowledge has not helped them be a church that expresses unity or love for one another. Their knowledge puffs them up with pride (8:1). Instead, says Paul, they should exercise love, the greatest of the spiritual gifts (13:13).

I'm all with Paul in chastising those Corinthians. But I get uncomfortable as I realize I share some of their foibles. I may not eat food sacrificed to idols (which is fine, says Paul, as long as you're not leading your fellow believers to do it against their conscience), but I may take part in some cultural activities I feel free to do while looking down on others who do not feel that freedom.

This suspicion of knowledge goes way back, clear back to the Garden of Eden, where Adam and

Eve were allowed to eat freely of every tree except "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Genesis 2:17). And we know what happened.

Solomon had great knowledge and did much for God. But then things fell apart, and a generation later the kingdom split in two.

Sex: The Bible also has a different take on knowledge. The word is used to describe the intimate act of lovemaking. Adam "knew" Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain (Genesis 4:1). This is the kind of intimate, loving knowledge we are called to have with God, one that goes to the core of our being.

This is what the Corinthians were missing. Rather than sharing the Lord's Supper as a meal of thanksgiving in remembrance of Jesus' death, some of them eat ahead so that they don't have to share their food with their brothers and sisters, while others get drunk (1 Corinthians 11:21). Communion is to be an intimate act of love that reflects our Lord. In their pursuit of knowledge, the Corinthians had not learned this.

I understand some of this because of books I've read. But I can't understand the intimate knowledge the Bible talks about without experiencing it. And this knowledge is not simply about sex. Rather, as Ronald Rolheiser writes in *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality* (Doubleday, 1999), it's about "a wholeness that, at some dark level, we know we have been separated from."

Rolheiser distinguishes sexuality, which he calls "sacred energy," from having sex. "A mature sexuality," he writes, "is when a person looks at what he or she has helped create, swells in a delight that breaks the prison of his or her selfishness, and feels as God feels when God looks at creation."

That word "selfishness" jumps out at me. Knowledge that puffs oneself up is a meager, loveless knowledge. But knowledge shared in love, one that creates something beautiful, is good. It builds up the community, including oneself.

The Corinthians seemed to be looking for ways to distinguish themselves from others. But the intimate knowledge to which God calls us joins us to the community of God's people and invites others to enjoy that love.

Postmodern philosophy: The history of knowledge has led to many people thinking they can solve problems strictly through reason. This idea, labeled modernism by some, promotes human knowledge as autonomous, i.e., humans can arrive at universally valid truths once they are free from the authority of any dominant texts or traditions. According to this "Enlightenment project," reason rules, and religion goes out the door.

In an article in *The Christian Century* ("Blind Spots: Christianity and Postmodern Philosophy," June 14, 2003), Merold Westphal, a professor of philosophy at Fordham University, looks at postmodern philosophy, which critiques modernism. Such a critique is in sync with the Bible, which says human wisdom is foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:25).

Westphal writes that in the Bible, instructions about how we should live are not based on human reason but on revelation from God. The biblical writers are not modernists who try to base their instructions on what is reasonable and universal among humankind. Instead they say, "This is the word of the Lord."

While some say postmodern philosophy reduces Christianity to "a tribal religion of those who happen to belong to a particular culture," Westphal points to the apostle Paul to refute such a notion. Modernism wants to reduce all faith to sight, but Paul insists that "we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7).

The intimate knowledge to which God calls us joins us to the community of God's people and invites others to enjoy that love.

"For Paul," Westphal writes, "the bold and universal proclamation of the gospel does not require absolute knowledge as its legitimizing backup. That task can be left to the Holy Spirit." Westphal goes on to mention two errors to be avoided in relation to postmodern philosophy. The "conservative" error insists against the evidence that it possesses an absolute knowledge. The "liberal" error assumes that since the church and its theologies are relative, the gospel is merely a cultural artifact.

We cannot prove God on a piece of paper. God is not a theorem but a person. The question thus becomes not what you know but who you know. We can know God's love intimately by experiencing that love in a multitude of ways. And, Paul says, we can proclaim that love and live it, for love is "the greatest of these" (1 Corinthians 13:13).

The question I'm left with is whether I'll use my (alleged) knowledge as a weapon to try to prove someone else wrong or admit I don't know much and try to learn what God may want to teach me, especially about loving others.

Next time someone greets me with, "What do you know?", perhaps I'll smile and say hello. Or perhaps not. I don't know.

Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite.

Mennonite to the point of vomiting?

Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.—Matthew 5:48

Sarah Thompson is a student at Spelman College in Atlanta and hopes telling her story will inspire others to tell theirs. Respond to treehugger18@juno.com.

Good Mennonites are not self-serving. They keep their daily struggles in the United States in perspective to the wars, famines and massacres around the world. One is supposed to "live simply that others may simply live." The more spiritual discipline one has, the better. Forgive others with grace but scrutinize your own actions. Put others first, yourself last. Do not be gluttonous. Purity, purity, purity. Work harder to get close to God. Let your faith be visible. Sacrifice.

I went from a Mennonite Mecca (Goshen, Ind.) to a desert—only 70 Mennonites in a town of 4 million. There were only two Mennonites in my school of 2,000. I felt called to this place and wanted to be here, but being Mennonite meant being odd. In this Christian school I was odd theologically, but my greater oddity was my cultural Mennoniteness.

When I ate, I felt gluttonous, so I threw it back up, an attempt to rid my body of the toxins and death I saw as a part of U.S. capitalism.

I became a representative for the entire Mennonite population. I became an expert at giving the one-minute rundown about Mennonites and our relationship to our buggy-driving cousins. The campus looked to me, my faith, to lead the antiwar movement. The last thing I wanted was to be caught in a situation that was full of contradictions and hypocrisy, for the sake of the Mennonite church and my reputation. I wanted to be pure, disciplined and humbled enough to be a leader others could follow.

I was not prepared for the consequences this responsibility had on my body. Through research I learned how capitalism, expansion and gluttony were responsible for many U.S. actions around the world. I tried to follow the teachings of the Bible about purity and perfection in the midst of consumer greed. I became increasingly disciplined, refrained from consuming anything frivolous.

One day I sat in the school cafeteria staring through tears at my vegan meal and my banana, which displayed a sticker that said, "Made in Costa Rica." I couldn't take it anymore. It was hard to eat, so I trained myself to stop. When I ate, I felt gluttonous, so I threw it back up, an attempt to rid my body of the toxins and death I saw as a part of U.S. capitalism. Jesus' call in Matthew 5:48 influenced my actions; I strove to be perfectly disciplined and live my faith in a humble, visible way. I was willing to make the sacrifice of not eating enough so that others would have abundance and joy in their hearts. The eating disorder was not the result of my faith, but faith became its justification.

I felt justice and peace were so important that I would risk all for their sake, even though I knew I would be no good to the cause if I were sick. As I maintained leadership in the antiwar movement at my school, no one could tell me I wasn't doing all I could to live an alternative, anti-greed lifestyle. Even as I got weaker, I saw my eating disorder as physical evidence of my triumph over the greedy forces in the world.

But it wasn't a triumph. I couldn't ignore the toll my self-discipline was taking on my body. After a forum at my school and a discussion with my pastor, I observed how a rigid faith may become distorted in times of isolation and crisis. I started identifying my thinking errors, both in my relationship with food and with God.

As my eating disorder abated, I strove to accept imperfection and hypocrisy and realized it is there, particularly, where Jesus enters. I asked myself what is important in life, and I studied how Jesus took care of himself. Learning to understand Mennonite tenets in moderation, I reclaimed myself as a beautiful creation of God and declared my efforts as a peacemaker to be a witness to the love and benevolence of a higher power. Removing the pressure of the outcome of world situations from my shoulders to God, I stopped purging to be perfect.

I am learning to respond to people's questions about contradictions with a grace that comes from God. I am reminded of the necessity of celebration in spiritual disciplines. I don't know what my sacrifices will be in the future, but I have gained the tools to sacrifice in a way that is life-giving.

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- **Overcoming lopsided Christianity**—Ron Sider
- **40 days of purpose**—Jennifer Rupp
- **Purpose-driven Mennonites**—Tom Kauffman

Mennonite-Lutheran talks debate history

Lutherans: Condemnations of Anabaptists do not apply to Mennonites today.

The first-ever official ecumenical dialogue between Mennonite Church USA and another denomination concluded March 18-21 at Valparaiso (Ind.) University. Representatives from Mennonite Church USA and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) finalized a report of findings from a series of meetings that began in February 2002. "Right Remembering in Anabaptist-Lutheran Relations," identifies major similarities and differences between the denominations and includes 11 recommendations.

The report recommends that the ELCA's Church Council declare that nearly all the 16th-century condemnations—many of which were inaccurate even then—do not apply to Mennonites today. The report also recommends that each denomination appoint a representative to a further discussion planned by the Lutheran World Federation and Mennonite World Conference.

Two condemnations in the Augsburg Confession, however, point toward remaining differences: baptism and church-state relationships. These issues were discussed in detail during the conversations, and the report includes points of agreement and divergence on both subjects.

For both Lutherans and Mennonites baptism concerns not only the individuals baptized but also their incorporation into the church. The congregation's reception of them, and pledge to support and nurture them, is essential. For both denominations, baptism is not an isolated event but closely linked to the overall process of Christian growth.

Mennonite representatives, however, said that baptism involves conscious, voluntary participation by baptized people. Baptism, then, cannot be applied to infants as it usually is among Lutherans. According to the Mennonites, many meanings that Lutherans attribute to infant baptism are included in Mennonite practices of infant dedication.

Lutherans stress the priority of God's grace in salvation. They find that infant baptism, where the recipient is passive, can symbolize this grace. They tend to fear that Mennonites, by emphasizing active, conscious response, may obscure God's grace. Mennonites, conversely, tend to fear that Lutherans, by emphasizing receptivity, may obscure the importance of discipleship. The report notes that these differences, and others, may be influenced by different understandings of human nature and the church, and these differences require further exploration.

Both Lutherans and Mennonites view the church as the messenger of God's kingdom, clearly distinct from the world. Both reject nuclear war and believe that Christians should behave nonviolently in their personal lives. According to both denominations, Christians should live out their faith in the midst of society and not isolate themselves from it.

Lutherans, however, permit members who serve in public roles to sometimes employ lethal force, justly and impartially, to preserve order. Mennonites reject the use of lethal force. Mennonites, however, sometimes encourage governments to act by standards which, while lower than those of the church, are still closer to God's will.

The report also recommends that Mennonites and Lutherans provide resources and work more closely in education, worship and social ministry. It proposes that several congregations in each denomination become pilot sites for this. It recommends that conversation on topics that surfaced in this round of conversations continue. But the report proposes no specific structure for this, and it does not envision any formal unity between the denominations.—*Thomas Finger*

Lutherans tend to fear that Mennonites ... may obscure God's grace. Mennonites tend to fear that Lutherans ... may obscure the importance of discipleship.
—Thomas Finger

MWC issues report on dialogue with Catholics, sends to churches

Five-plus years after they first met for a formal dialogue, representatives from Mennonite World Conference and the Catholic Church's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity have issued a report of their conversations. Its title, "Called Together to Be Peacemakers," hints at both the intention and tone of the meetings. MWC will now forward copies of the report to all of its member churches for "study and reaction." The English document has been translated into French; a Spanish translation is underway.

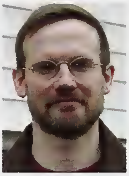
"We are now entering a broadening stage in the process," says MWC executive secretary Larry Miller, one of the participants in the conversations. "This report is not a kind of encyclical handed down from the MWC office. Instead it is intended to be reviewed and explored by Mennonites and Brethren in Christ around the world from the point of view of their contexts and convictions.

"This approach is somewhat of an innovation, as far as I know, " says Miller. "Instead of MWC simply issuing a report or taking it first to its governing body to be formally accepted, we are taking a two- to three-year period during which member churches can respond. The MWC General Council will review both the report and the responses from member churches when it meets next, in 2006."

The report is available in paper or electronic form from MWC.—*Phyllis Pellman Good for MWC News Service*

Pacific Northwest has conference teacher

Two-year training process for those wanting to receive a ministerial credential



I liked how Mennonites took Jesus seriously. They took the Bible at face value in terms of living out what Jesus said.
—William Higgins

William Higgins lives thousands of miles away from the epicenters of Mennonite Church USA. But that doesn't stop him from bringing the center of the Anabaptist faith to Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference.

A lack of nearby academic campuses may be seen as a stumbling block, but the conference has used it as a stepping-stone, says Higgins, pastor of Peace Mennonite Church in Portland, Ore., and conference teacher. The distance inspired him and other conference leaders to use their own resources to strengthen Anabaptist identity among pastors seeking a ministerial credential from the conference. Now by using Higgins' training, Pacific Northwest provides seminars for laity and classes on Mennonite history, doctrine and polity.

As a conference teacher, Higgins helps build this identity—honed for him by becoming Mennonite as an adult. He learned about Mennonites in graduate school, when he felt disillusioned with his childhood faith, he says. And like a reformation of sorts, Higgins fell in love with Anabaptist ways and now loves to teach them.

"I learned about the Anabaptists," says Higgins, "while studying for my comprehensive exam on the Reformation for my doctorate in systematic theology." Higgins, 39, grew up mostly Wesleyan Methodist, with some Southern Baptist influences in Georgia and Alabama.

"I'd heard about Anabaptist history of the radical reformers, but I didn't know much about how Mennonites lived out their faith today. The more I learned that Mennonites included others besides people who lived in colonies and plain people, the more I realized I fit.

"I liked how Mennonites took Jesus seriously. They took the Bible at face value in terms of living out what Jesus said. That was refreshing after I had waded through what I felt were distortions of biblical texts that don't link his life with ours. Mennonites read the Bible as a guidebook for the daily lives and not just as an ancient story."

He further studied Mennonite faith confessions, after which he and Stacey, his wife, became Mennonites. They first attended Victory Gardens Mennonite Church in Dover, N.J. After moving to Portland—where he first painted houses—they attended Peace Mennonite and began to raise their family, which now includes three daughters.

"I struggled over whether I wanted to teach in an academic setting or not," he says. "Stacey encouraged me to put my application in for ministry in the Pacific Northwest."

Higgins began an internship at Peace Mennonite, which 10 years ago led him into a full-time pastorate he still has today.

The pastorate satisfied some of his passion for teaching, but he wanted to reach a wider scope. He began teaching the Anabaptist history and theology course in 2000 on a per diem basis. And in spring 2003 he became a quarter-time conference teacher for the two-year credentialing cycle as well as offering seminars on various topics to laity.

"He brings a theological and historical understanding of our faith and helps us all know what it means to be the family of Mennonites here in Pacific Northwest," says Duncan Smith, a leader for the conference ministry team.

For Higgins teaching in congregations embodies his belief that teaching is ministry, not a profession, and that it's done best in the local congregation.

"I've always wondered if theologians would do better to place themselves in the middle of a community of believers who struggle with their everyday lives rather than in settings that are far removed," he says.—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service.*

MCC photo by Iris de Leon-Harshorn

Ortiz honored by Puerto Rico churches

The Conference of Mennonite Churches of Puerto Rico recently honored Jose Ortiz for his work as director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. They presented him with a certificate during a service at the Iglesia Betania Mennonite church.

Ortiz (right) is pictured with church leaders Enriquez Ortiz, left, executive secretary of the conference, and Delia Mundo, registrar of Academia Menonita in San Juan and a member of the MCC East Coast board of directors. Ortiz, who grew up in the Aibonito area, will retire this summer after five years as MCC U.S. director. The Friday night service at the church was part of the March 26-27 meetings of the executive committee of the MCC U.S. board. The setting of the honor—which surprised Ortiz—was especially meaningful for him, since Iglesia Betania had played an important role in his life.

"That's where I committed myself to serving the Lord," he says, adding that he can still point out the bench where he was sitting when he felt God's call. —*MCC U.S. News Service*

First Ethiopian church in New Jersey

Bronx, N.Y., congregation crosses bridge to form a daughter congregation.

For the past two years, Ethiopian pastor Mulugeta Abate at the Emmanuel Worship Center in the Bronx, N.Y., has driven—almost weekly—across the George Washington Bridge to lead home Bible studies in New Jersey. Then on Sundays, Emmanuel members who lived in New Jersey faithfully trekked back across the bridge—paying at least a $6 toll—to worship in the Bronx.

Planting a daughter church in New Jersey seemed like the logical next step for this young mother church of over 100 members. But were they ready to take the step?

The church prayed, sought counsel from Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) staff members Lawrence Chiles and Henry Buckwalter, and New York bishop Monroe Yoder. They found a suitable meeting place in East Orange, N. J., and sensed God answering yes.

In May 2003, the new church began as a daughter church to Emmanuel. Pastors Mulugeta and Mesfin Mamo took turns commuting from the Bronx to New Jersey to lead the weekly services. A group of approximately 30 adults and children from the Bronx church formed the core of the new church plant, but new attendees showed as well.

"Our vision remains the same: to reach the unreached in our communities both Ethiopians and others," Mulugeta says. "We're excited about the new people who are coming. Our committed members were willing to make the sacrifice of driving into the city for church [at the first location], but this [new] location is more accessible to others."

He estimates that 20,000 Ethiopians and Eritreans live in the tri-state area of New York, Connecticut and New Jersey. Emmanuel's church plant is the first Ethiopian church in New Jersey.

Mulugeta continues to serve as senior pastor of Emmanuel Worship Center, overseeing both the Bronx and New Jersey locations. But after the first months of meeting in New Jersey, Mulugeta says he sensed God was calling Mesfin to pastor the new church. After prayer, Mesfin and Lily, his wife, confirmed this call and moved to New Jersey last October with their three young children.

Dale D Gehman

Ethiopian pastors Mesfin Mamo (left) and Mulugeta Abate have worked closely together at the Emmanuel Worship Center in the Bronx and now in the planting of the branch congregation in New Jersey.

With this clear focus and new location, Mesfin and the New Jersey ministerial team are getting acquainted with their new "parish" and laying foundations for the church. They are focusing on Ethiopians and hold preaching and worship in Amharic. They've also started a Sunday school program. Home groups continue to meet throughout the week, including seekers who haven't yet joined the church. They are surveying the community—which includes a greater number of professionals—to discover where the Ethiopians live.

Before accepting leadership responsibilities at the new church, Mesfin worked with Mulugeta for seven years on the leadership team and as an assistant pastor in the Bronx. *—Jewel Showalter of EMM News Service*

Plains youth in the Big Apple

Eight students and their youth sponsors spent a weekend learning about life and ministry in New York City on March 20-21. From Plains Mennonite Church in Hatfield, Pa., the group stayed in the guest rooms at Menno House, a residence owned by Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship for students, volunteers and people who work at local nonprofits. The youth divided into groups to tour the work sites of three Menno House residents.

March 20 was also the day of a large peace demonstration protesting the war in Iraq. Approximately 100,000 people crowded the streets with signs and banners, trying to bring attention to the need for peace. On Sunday, the group went to two worship services: one at Judson Memorial Church in Greenwich Village and another in the afternoon at Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship.

"I think we're all able to see now that the bright lights and glamour of the big city are external," says Ashley Rittenhouse, a member of the Plains youth group. "In reality, there are really great people doing really great things to help others."*—Lowell Brown for Menno House*

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Courtesy photo

'A win-win-win solution': A student works on restoring a stained-glass window.

The Union Project

MEDA helps restore derelict church

Pittsburgh Mennonites create classes to teach restoration of stained glass.

It's a lot more interesting to restore the windows this way than to raise the money and pay someone else to do it.
—Jessica King

The Union Project in Pittsburgh had a problem. They wanted to restore the century-old Union Baptist Church, an abandoned edifice that had deteriorated into a community eyesore. A group of people—including many Pittsburgh Mennonites, along with other artists, community builders and people of faith—had formed the Union Project with a vision to transform the grand structure into a community center with work space for artists and a gathering place for community builders and people of faith.

The big problem was the windows; the 15,000-square-foot building had more than 100 of them. Community volunteers were willing to work, but the original stained-glass and leaded windows needed special attention. Estimates to restore them professionally ranged from $500,000 to $1 million.

Then a light went on. Many Pittsburgh homes had stained or leaded windows, and surely many of these also needed repair. Was there a do-it-yourself solution around the corner? A proposal soon emerged to offer classes in stained-glass restoration.

That's where Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) came in. MEDA's Community Economic Development department works with 32 community-based organizations in six cities in the United States to build capacity and boost impact.

MEDA helped the Union Project with an organizational assessment, strategic planning and the development of management systems. It also provided a $20,000 flow-through grant from the U.S. government's Compassion Capital Fund Project to help begin renovations.

Part of the grant money was invested in getting started. A fee would be charged to cover instruction, tools and replacement glass. The church's old windows would be the class material.

Word went out, and soon the first class was full. A second class was offered on a consecutive night, and that too was soon full. Students became proficient in stained-glass restoration. They were taught how to dismantle each window, clean each piece of glass, cut replacement glass for broken pieces, re-lead each window and attach reinforcement bars. The first classes restored 29 windows, leaving some 100 more for future students.

"It's a lot more interesting to restore the windows this way than to raise the money and pay someone else to do it," says Jessica King, executive director of the Union Project.

One class member, quoted in a local newspaper, called the project "a brilliant solution to a million-dollar problem." Another called it "an innovative win-win-win solution. I learned how to restore my own stained glass, receive important knowledge that will help me go on to create my own windows with further work, and help a worthy community project at the same time. How cool is that?"—*John Longhurst of MEDA News Service*

First Colombian woman pastor ordained

More than 130 baptized in congregation that she began as cell church in 1981

The Colombian Mennonite Church ordained Edith Acuña as its first woman pastor on March 28. Acuña has been working in a pastoral role since 1981, when she started a cell church in Juan Pablo Segundo, a Bogotá neighborhood. The cell church began primarily as a Sunday school, working with 60 children. It eventually grew into Jehova Sama Christian Mennonite Community, a member congregation of the Colombian Mennonite Church.

Since she began pastoring, Acuña has baptized some 130 adult believers. However, her congregation remains focused on children, with 75 currently attending Sunday school classes taught by four teachers. Acuña emphasizes the importance of "equipping these young people with the vision of the kingdom of heaven." Some of the children with whom she worked in the 1980s now send their kids to the Sunday school.

"I call my church a 'sowers church,'" Acuña says. "Many leaders and strong believers have come out of our congregation."

Because of economic and political instability, residents of the neighborhood are constantly moving away. New residents arrive as internal refugees, displaced by the violence of Colombia's longstanding civil war. They tend to end up in neighborhoods like Juan Pablo Segundo, without work, and often without the possibility of finding formal work.

Of the 25 adults who regularly attend Acuña's church, only one—a teacher—is formally employed. Other congregants are day laborers working as temporary maids or selling vegetables or crafts on the street. For this reason the weekly church offering collection is small: Easter Sunday's offering was 1,300 pesos (about 60 cents U.S.). Offering money and other donations are enough to pay the church's bills, such as water and electricity. Fortunately the congregation does not have to pay rent. Through donations from North American congregations, the Juan Pablo congregation purchased its church building.

Acuña and her husband, Edgar, support themselves by selling arts and crafts. Edgar makes handicrafts, and Acuña is a talented painter in oil and acrylic. Their youngest son, Esteben, is in high school and lives at home. Their three older children are married, giving Acuna a total of four grandchildren.

Acuña began her formal training as a pastor in 1990, when the Mennonite Biblical Seminary opened in Bogotá. She studied part-time, eventually graduating in 2000. Acuña has plans to continue her studies in Costa Rica.

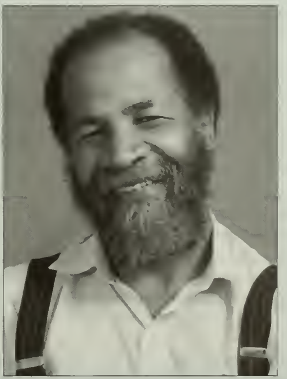
She has been a Mennonite for 30 years, coming from a devout Catholic family, but when she and her husband moved to the capital they visited Berna Mennonite Church. After her first visit, Acuña continued attending at Berna until she started the cell church. Her husband, however, had little interest in the church until eight years ago, when he was baptized into the Mennonite church. Now he is an active participant in the congregation. He spoke at Acuña's commissioning service, giving her a ring and a huge hug.—*Micah Shristi of Mennonite Colony*

I call my church a 'sowers church.' Many leaders and strong believers have come out of our congregation.—Edith Acuña

Wall of protection for Colombian leader

Ricardo Esquivia Ballestas, Mennonite church leader and peace activist in Colombia, says the overwhelming response of the national and international community has created an "international wall of protection" and has kept him from arrest at this time. He continues with plans to work on Colombia's Caribbean Coast.

In January, several sources confirmed threats of his imminent arrest. They cited false charges that he is a member of a guerrilla group. Esquivia has not been arrested. Colombian national government officials received hundreds of letters, faxes, calls and emails exposing the plan. The messages came from government departments within Colombia and from the international community, including U.S., British, German and Canadian embassies, from nongovernmental organizations, churches and individuals, all made aware of the threat by Esquivia's supporters. About 12 members of the U.S. Congress sent letters directly to Colombian President Alvaro Uribe.
—Ferne Burkhardt of Mennonite World Conference News Service



Esquivia

Amish roots for Bluffton College women

Both were surprised to discover they had the same senior honors project.

Erin Miller and Karen Bontrager grew up together in Iowa and influenced each other to attend Bluffton (Ohio) College, but they were surprised to find out their senior honors projects focused on the same topic: their Amish roots.

People left the Amish community [because] they wanted newer technology and were unhappy with the lack of emphasis on Bible study, evangelism and missions.

Steve Shenk

Erin Miller (left) and Karen Bontrager both picked their Amish roots as the subject of their senior honors projects.

Both students researched their families' conversion from Amish to Mennonite in the 1940s. Miller, a history major, studied the reasons her family—and others—left the Amish faith in the rural Wellman/Kalona community of southeastern Iowa. Bontrager, an English major, conducted a literary analysis of her grandmother's writings about growing up Amish and then rejecting that tradition.

Bontrager's 57-page paper, "Reading Clara/Writing Mennonite," is not a traditional research paper.

"I call it creative nonfiction, mixed with poetry," she says. "In the project I interact on a personal level with the life and writings of my grandmother."

Her grandmother, with whom she shares a middle name, is Clara Bernice Miller, who wrote four novels between 1962 and 1977. The novels, published by Herald Press of Mennonite Publishing House, were *The Crying Heart*, *Katie*, *The Tender Herb* and *To All Generations*.

"I drew on what Grandma had done as a writer and reflected on the ramifications for me as a modern Mennonite writer," says Bontrager.

Her grandparents left the Amish community after they had three children. Their reasons for leaving—and the themes running through Miller's books—were that the Amish lacked spiritual fervor and failed to share their faith with others.

"Her books fall into the coming-of-age genre," says Bontrager. "They feature young women making life-changing decisions like who to marry and whether or not to stay Amish."

Meanwhile, Erin Miller studied 70 years of Amish retention and defection patterns, resulting in a 60-page paper titled "The Kalona Amish." Her research included 20 interviews last summer with people who left the Amish faith.

"There was a huge exodus between 1945 and 1960, with perhaps up to 60 percent of the Amish leaving their community," says Miller. "I learned that other Amish communities in America experienced similar defection rates."

Among the reasons that people left the Amish community, she found, was that they wanted newer technology, especially for farming, and they were unhappy with the lack of emphasis on Bible study and on evangelism and missions. Another factor was that young Amish men were exposed to the wider world through alternative service as conscientious objectors during World War II.

"Today, though, the Amish defection rate—both in my community and nationally—is only about 5 percent," Miller says. "The main reason, I think, is that the Amish have isolated themselves more and strengthened their distinctives." One important way was to establish their own schools.

Miller believes her research project is a way to connect with members of her extended family, some of whom are still part of the Amish community.

Senior honors projects at Bluffton are a three-semester process, resembling post-graduate studies.—*Steve Shenk of Bluffton College News Service.*

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WORKERS

Carpenter, James and Faith, were installed April 4 as ministers of nurture at Locust Grove Mennonite Church, Burr Oak, Mich.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Basinger-Unzinger, Sophia Helen, April 7, to David Unzinger and Janelle Basinger, St. Louis, Mo.

Beadle, Kaylin Joy Chun, Feb. 8, 2003, received for adoption March 8 by Shawn and Pam Graves Beadle, Des Allemands, La.

Bontrager, Asher Nicholas Stephen, April 12, to Anthony and Nichole Burlew Bontrager, Shipshewana, Ind.

Cessna, Micah Peter, March 30, to Stephen and Gretchen Cessna, Harrisonburg, Va.

Chavez, Jonah Lucas, March 11, to Michael and Joanna Chavez, Hatfield, Pa.

Gautsche, Isabella Alynn, April 1, to Cody and Blair Gautsche, Bronson, Mich.

Graber, Joel Brookmyer, March 31, to Shane and Jama Brookmyer Graber, Archbold, Ohio.

Hancock, Jesse Ann, March 20, to Richard and Carol Flaming Hancock, Wichita, Kan.

Hardy, Katelyn Marie, March 25, to Chris and Sheila Miller Hardy, Tulsa, Okla.

Kahila, Carson Brett, Jan. 8, to Chris and Kerri Kahila, Sturgis, Mich.

Keener, Jacob Aaron, March 24, to David and Joylynn Reese Keener, Lancaster, Pa.

Leniger, Nicole Lee, April 4, to Corey and Jennifer Leniger, Telford, Pa.

Liestman, Brant Micah, March 25, to Greg and Erica Baus Liestman, Goshen, Ind.

Litwiller, Ezekiel Gene, March 9, to Rodney and Diane McKinley Litwiller, Morton, Ill.

Litwiller, Sarah Olivia, April 3, to Marc and Kim Watkins Litwiller, Hopedale, Ill.

Martin, Garrett Chad, Feb. 19, to Stefan and Heidi Swartzentruber Martin, Flourtown, Pa.

Martin, Hannah Justina, March 9, to Darvin L. and Regina Christman Martin, Brownstown, Pa.

Moore, Mario Rene, Jan. 22, 2000, received for adoption Feb. 27 by Chris and MaryBeth Heatwole Moore, Staunton, Va.

Peltier, Tyler James, March 22, to Steven and Susan Schaefer Peltier, Phoenix.

Perez, Camila Isabel, March 28, to Gilberto Perez and Denise Diener, Goshen, Ind.

Powell, Dakota Wayne, March 25, to Sam and Lora Weaver Powell, Hartville, Ohio.

Regier, Mason Andrew, March 30, to Andrew and Valerie Ediger Regier, Henderson, Neb.

Rumsey, Alden Matthew, April 4, to Kevin and Tangela Rumsey, Coldwater, Mich.

Schlabach, Bella Claire, April 5, to Richie and Amy Schlabach, Akron, Ohio.

Shank, Jacob Todd, March 19, to Greg and Bethany Miller Shank, Goshen, Ind.

Wiebe, Andrew James, April 3, to Stanley and Patty A. Wiebe, Raleigh, N.C.

MARRIAGES

Johnson/Law: Heidi Johnson, Inman, Kan., and Joseph Law III, Radcliff, Ky., March 27 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman.

King/Mock: Michelle King, Boswell, Pa., and Michael Mock, Davidsville, Pa., March 20 at Thomas Mennonite Church, Thomas Mill, Pa.

Beachy/Williams: Larry Beachy, Arcola, Ill., and Myra Williams, Arcola, March 20 at Arthur (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

DEATHS

Ackerman, Susan Suderman, 89, Chenoa, Ill., died April 4 of heart failure. Spouse: Frank Ackerman. Parents: Cornelius and Anna Kroeker Suderman. Children: Ronald, Joyce Baergen, Lois Smith, Doris Egli; nine grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 7 at Meadows Mennonite Church, Chenoa.

Conrad, Grace Weaver, 91, Coldwater, Mich., died March 30. Spouse: Lloyd Conrad (deceased). Parents: William S. and Anna Good Weaver. Children: Anna Marie Troyer, Rita Leichty; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 3 at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind.

Denlinger, Clarence E., 94, Lititz, Pa., died March 18. Spouse: Mildred Mohler Denlinger. Parents: Emanuel and Mary Eby Denlinger. Children: Kenneth E., Donald E., B. Laverne Martin, Loretta Benson; 13 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 21 at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Esau, Robert A., 80, Beatrice, Neb., died March 23. Spouse: Ruth Hamm Esau. Parents: Adolph and Gertrude Penner Esau. Children: Kent, Robert W., Ann Kerl; three grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 26 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice, Neb.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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Gardner, Katie Marie Stutzman, 93, Seward, Neb., died March 18. Spouse: Guy W. Gardner (deceased). Parents: Emery and Katie Birky Stutzman. Children: Richard, Jim, Lonny; nine grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 22 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford, Neb.

Gochnauer, Henry B., 90, Lititz, Pa., died March 20. Spouse: Viola Martin Shenk Gochnauer. Parents: Elmer and Mabel Bowers Gochnauer. Children: Robert H., Donald H.; step-children Shirley King, Nancy Shenk, Jay Shenk, John Shenk; four grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild; 11 step-grandchildren; 20 step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 24 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Goering, Violet Miller, 83, Freeman, S.D., died March 16. Spouse: Orlando J. Goering. Parents: John M. and Lydia Waltner Miller. Children: Arden, Lynette James, Diane Witt, Janice; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 21 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Hiebert, George C., 100, Mountain Lake, Minn., died March 19 of a heart attack. Spouse: Elizabeth Wiebe Hiebert (deceased). Parents: Cornelius C. and Maria Flemming Hiebert. Children: Marilyn Cox, Eleanor Friesen, Marjorie Penner, Robert; 17 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 24 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minn.

Hostetler, Arlene M. Erb, 76, Louisville, Ohio, died March 29. Spouse: Vincent Hostetler (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Sevilla Miller Erb. Children: Jean Burdett, Diane Duff, Denise Miller, Delmar; 11 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; two step-grandchildren. Funeral: April 1 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville.

King, Hugh, 86, Hesston, Kan., died April 6. Spouse: Viola Zehr King. Parents: Marion and Artie Kauffman King. Child: Janice Kauffman; three grandchildren. Funeral: April 10 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Magdefrau, James, 80, Washington, Iowa, died March 19. Spouse: Waunita Kauffman Magdefrau (deceased). Parents: Albert and Leola Magdefrau. Child: Sandra Bear; two grandchildren. Funeral: March 24 in Wayland, Iowa.

Marner, Amelia Jo Troyer, 85, Glendale, Ariz., died March 20 of heart failure. Spouse: Walter Marner. Parents: Manasseh and Amelia Zimmerman Troyer. Children: Greg, Lowell, Kay Moser, Randy; 10 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 24 at Glencroft Mennonite Church, Glendale.

Martin, Barbara Yoder, 84, East Earl, Pa., died April 6. Spouse: Clarence B. Martin (deceased). Parents: Jonas Peter and Mary King Yoder. Funeral: April 9 at Furman Funeral Home, Leola, Pa.

Meyer, Frederick "Fritz", 75, Rock Falls, Ill., died March 16. Spouse: Joyce Bell Meyer. Parents: Ado and Grace Ruter Meyer. Child: Karen. Funeral: March 18 at Schilling Funeral Home, Sterling, Ill.

Myers, Marian Swartley, 82, Souderton, Pa., died March 19. Spouse: Herbert E. Myers, Sr. (deceased). Parents: William and Ida Myers Swartley. Children: Herbert, Beverly Ehst, Elizabeth Anthony; seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 23 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Nice, Cecil, 90, Morrison, Ill., died March 20. Spouse: Mary Yoder Nice. Parents: Abner and Esther Deter Nice. Children: Elaine, Dolores Nice-Siegenthaler, Harvey, Eldon, Steven, Michael; five grandchildren. Funeral: March 24 at Science Ridge Mennonite Church, Sterling, Ill.

Preheim, Linda Schrag, 98, Freeman, S.D., died April 9. Spouse: Jacob Preheim (deceased). Parents: John M. and Marie Graber Schrag. Children: Julaine Goering, Janice Mendel; four grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 13 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Ratzlaff, Elmer, 86, Hesston, Kan., died April 3. Spouse: Blondie Huxman. Parents: Abraham A. and Justina Enns Ratzlaff. Children: Paul W., John W., David L.; six grandchildren. Funeral: April 7 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

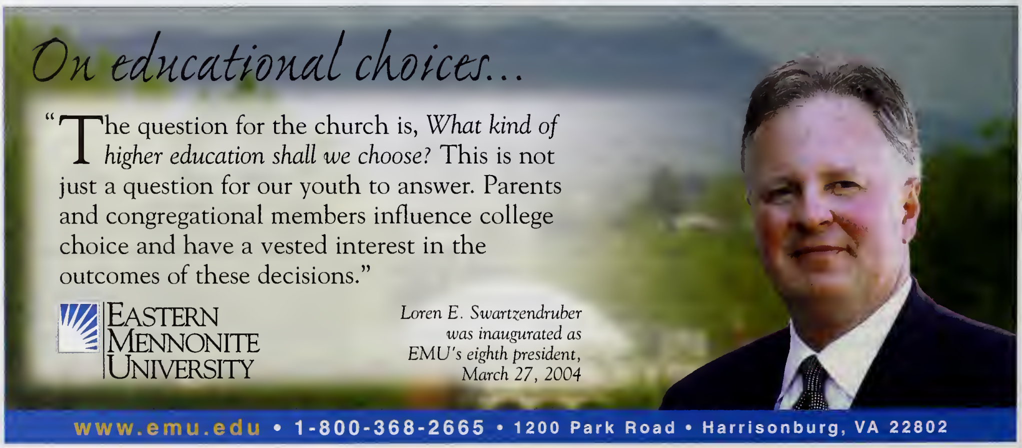
Siebert, Anna Peters, 94, Henderson, Neb., died April 1. Spouse: Peter Siebert (deceased). Parents: John D. and Katherine Wieler Peters. Children: Darlene Janzen, Esther Fox, Carol Epp, Aldena, Darrel, Elvin; 10 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 5 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Smith, George E., 87, St. Johns, Mich., died March 24 of cancer. Spouse: Wilma Miller Smith (deceased). Parents: John and Elizabeth Smith. Children: Don, Ron, George; seven grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 29 at Bethel Mennonite Church, St. Johns.

Stoltzfus, Roy, 92, Douglasville, Pa., died April 11. Spouse: Minnie Glick Stoltzfus (deceased). Parents: Abner and Sarah Yoder Stoltzfus. Children: Marlin R., Dwight E., Howard L., Sara E. Mullet, Mary Kathleen Egglink, Carol E.; 10 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 16 at Boyertown (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Tesh, Edward, 72, Johnstown, Pa., died March 30. Spouse: Helen D. Walker Tesh (deceased). Parents: William R. and Katherine Dudenhofer Tesh. Funeral: April 1 at Moskal and Kennedy Funeral Home, Johnstown.

Wedel, Earla Yost, 69, Hesston, Kan., died March 23. Spouse: Merlin Wedel. Parents: Harvey and Elizabeth Yost. Children: Bruce, Sondra Wedel Leatherman, Jay; seven grandchildren. Funeral: March 27 at Hesston Mennonite Church.



On educational choices...

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Loren E. Swartzendruber was inaugurated as EMU's eighth president, March 27, 2004

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First Mennonite Church in Denver is seeking an ***associate pastor of faith formation.*** This is a new position focused on (1) Christian-Anabaptist/Mennonite education, (2) enriching development of each one's faith journey, (3) encouraging the understanding of one's faith in daily living and (4) assisting in spiritual direction for individuals and the congregation as a whole. The successful candidate should have seminary training, be strongly rooted in Anabaptist beliefs and have some background with the Mennonite tradition (faith experience, pastorate or seminary training). The applicant should complete the MLI through Mennonite Church USA and submit to Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference.

For a full job description and information about First Mennonite Church, applicants are encouraged to contact Arden Slotter at slottera@aol.com or visit our church Web site, www.fmcdenver.org, or write c/o First Mennonite Church, 430 W. Ninth Ave., Denver, CO 80204.

Blossom Hill Mennonite Church, a growing congregation of 100+ in suburban Lancaster, Pa., seeks applicants for new half-time ***associate pastor*** position. Anabaptist commitment, gifts in discipling believers, developing small groups and community outreach; good interpersonal and organizational abilities. Contact Jon Unger Brandt at jubnlub@yahoo.com or 717-393-3029.

Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio, is seeking candidates for the full-time position of ***minister of youth.*** Candidates should have strong Anabaptist beliefs and have a passion for children, youth and young adults. Full job description is available by contacting Kelvin Friesen at 419-445-0856 or kelfriesen@rtecexpress.net.

Position open: 1/3-time ***director of young adult ministries*** at **Harrisonburg Mennonite Church** in Harrisonburg, Va. Inquiries and resumés should be sent to Director of Young Adult Ministries Search Committee, c/o Lois Shank, Harrisonburg Mennonite Church, 1552 S. High Str., Harrisonburg, VA 22801; email LRS1157@aol.com.

Mennonite Publishing Network, the publishing ministry of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada, is seeking a ***director of operations.*** Responsibilities include: serving as a member of the management team; providing on-site supervision for MPN's administrative support services currently located in Scottdale, Pa.; helping to develop and implement a long-term strategy to relocate MPN operations to centers of Mennonite population. Qualifications: must subscribe to and support MPN's vision, core values and strategic plan; must be skilled in administration, financial management and planning, team building; must be able to work closely and in a collegial manner with the MPN executive director and with other staff; must be a member in good standing of a Mennonite church affiliated with MC USA or MC Canada. This new position is required by MPN as soon as possible. For further information, contact Ron Rempel, executive director, rrempel@mph.org; 519-496-9487.

Lombard Mennonite Church *celebrates 50 years.* Join us Labor Day weekend for worship, music and memories. Watch for an invitation in the mail or contact the church at 630-627-5310 or LombardMenno@aol.com.

Missional Centers of Mennonite Church USA

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Mennonite Church USA

Mennonite Secondary Education Council

Bluffton College invites applications and nominations for ***vice president and dean of academic affairs.*** Qualifications include: appropriate academic preparation and experience in developing and administering innovative academic programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels and a demonstrated commitment to the mission of a Mennonite church-related liberal arts institution. Applications are being accepted now and will continue until an appointment is made—but no later than fall 2005. For more information see www.bluffton.edu/about/employment/dean/. A letter of application, resumé and list of references may be sent to the President's Office, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817; or credentials and application letter may be submitted electronically to deansearch@Bluffton.edu. AA/EOE

Warwick River Christian School, www.wrcs.info, is seeking Mennonite ***certified teachers*** for fall openings in Grades 1-8. Respond to Administrator Gordon Zook, 252 Lucas Creek Road, Newport News, VA 23602; 757-877-2941 or gorzook@yahoo.com.

Holly Grove Christian School, an auxiliary of Holly Grove Mennonite Church, located in Westover, Md., a nondenominational Christian school in its 28th year with enrollment of 530 students, K-12, is seeking an ***elementary and/or high school administrator.*** Please submit resumé and inquiries to Personnel Committee, 6730 Powell Wharf Road., Pocomoke City, MD 21851; 410-957-2876; email detwiler@intercom.net.

Camp Deerpark is seeking to fill the position of ***food service director.*** This person is responsible for all aspects of food service, including planning menus, food preparation and supervision of kitchen volunteers and staff. Salaried position with benefits, including housing and insurance. Camp Deerpark is owned and operated by the New York City Mennonite Churches and offers people of all ages, races and backgrounds the opportunity to enjoy Christian camping at an affordable price. For more information please contact Ken Bontrager at 845-754-8669 or Deerpark@warwick.net.

Oaklawn Psychiatric Center in northern Indiana has an immediate opening for a ***psychologist.*** Doctoral degree meeting the requirements for Indiana licensure. Indiana license with HSPP endorsement or eligibility preferred. Salary is commensurate with experience and qualifications. You may send a resumé via mail, fax or email to Human Resources, Oaklawn, P.O. Box 809, Goshen, IN 46527; fax 574-537-2698; email humanresources@oaklawn.org. Learn more about us and other opportunities available by visiting www.oaklawn.org. An equal opportunity employer.

Argentina Mission Partnership. Argentine Mennonite Conference (IEMA) invites Mennonite Church USA congregations into collaboration with the ***Missionary Project of Northern Argentina (PROMINOA).*** Its vision is to bring people to Christ and plant churches in two zones north of Buenos Aires. Mennonite Mission Network seeks congregations interested in this or other global mission partnerships to contact Dean Heisey at 866-866-2872 or Partnership@MennoniteMission.net. Together we will forge effective mission collaboration between Mennonite Church USA's Mission Network, IEMA and your congregation! Partnership opportunities are also available in Africa and Asia and your suggestions for new partnerships are welcome.

Leaders needed! **Mennonite Mission Network** needs leaders for the ***Deo and Service Adventure programs*** this summer! One- to two-year terms available depending on program. For more information go to http://service.mennonitemission.net or call Kent Miller at 866-866-2872.

Mennonite Central Committee U.S.'s Office on Crime and Justice and Mennonite Concilation Service are sponsoring an ***advanced training institute entitled "Working with Groups"*** Oct. 11-15 at the MCC Welcoming Place, Akron, Pa. The cost is $450 ($500 for registrations received after Sept. 17); some scholarship assistance is available. For more information, visit www.mcc.org/us/peaceandjustice/mcs.html or contact MCS at P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501, 717-859-1151; mcs@mccus.org.

Anabaptists! *Anabaptist Connections* newsletter available. Newsletter reviews Swiss-Anabaptist reconciliation status and timely articles. Also the book *Rekindling the Anabaptist Flame.* $10 P.P.D. Phone 406-293-2442 or 406-293-2980; HCR61 Box 140RD, Bonners Ferry, ID 83805.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.15 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available.

To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Marla Cole, or email TheMennonite@TheMennonite.org.

RESOURCES

In God's Image: A Global Anabaptist Family by Ray Dirks (Herald Press, 2003, $29.99 hardcover, $24.99 paperback) is a full-cover coffee-table book that celebrates the approximately 2 million Anabaptist-Mennonites around the world. Dirks assembled this book of art, photos and stories of shared faith from 17 countries.

A High Price for Abundant Living: The Story of Capitalism by Henry Rempel (Herald Press, 2004, $14.99) is a guide to our current economic system—how it came to be and how it works today. It encourages developing a better system where the creative and enterprising spirit seeks a better life for the entire global community.

Journeys of the Muslim Nation and the Christian Church: Exploring the Mission of Two Communities by David W. Shenk (Herald Press, 2004, $14.99) examines Islam and Christianity at their deepest spiritual, cultural and communal levels. It reflects years of conversations and dialogue with Muslim friends.

A Celebration of Faith in His Name is a series of recordings by the Gloriae Dei Cantores Schola that illuminates the life of Jesus through Gregorian chant. **The Coming of Christ** highlights the prophecies and events of Jesus' nativity. **The Beloved Son** celebrates the public life of Christ, including his teachings, miracles and parables. **I Am With You** is about Christ's passion. Each recording is $16.95. To order contact 800-451-5006 or wendyc@paracletepress.com.

Reading the Bible in the Strange World of Medicine by Allen Verhey (Eerdmans, 2004, $35) explores how the Bible can illuminate and guide medical ethics. Verhey shows how the Bible can be applied to such pressing concerns as suffering, genetic intervention, abortion, reproductive technologies, end-of-life care and physician-assisted suicide.

Seven Days With the Gospel of Mark: For a Personal or Shared Retreat by Joseph G. Donders (Twenty-Third Publications, 2004, $6.95) helps readers uncover the mystery of Jesus in his moments of teaching, healing , suffering and glory.

I Am Jewish: Personal Reflections Inspired by the Last Words of Daniel Pearl, edited by Judea and Ruth Pearl (Jewish Lights Publishing, 2004, $24.99) captures the reflections of almost 150 people from many countries on what it means for them to say, "I am Jewish." All royalties from the book support the Daniel Pearl Foundation, which promotes cross-cultural understanding through journalism, music and innovative communications.

A Bearer of Divine Revelation: New and Selected Stories by Lawrence Dorr (Eerdmans, 2004, $18) includes 15 stories that follow a central character through episodes reflecting Dorr's own eventful life: his childhood in Hungary, wartime experiences on the Russian front, hardship and poverty, the death of family and friends.

Eternal Seasons: A Liturgical Journey with Henri J.M. Nouwen, edited by Michael Ford (Ave Maria Press, 2004, $18.95) includes an introduction for each of the liturgical seasons, followed by selections from the writings of Nouwen.

Mennonite World Conference has released a CD of music from Africa 2003, last year's global assembly held in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Produced by Bryan Moyer Suderman, the CD is available for $14 ($18 Cdn.) plus shipping from 866-696-1678 or at www.pandorapress.com.

Discipleship as Political Responsibility by John Howard Yoder (Herald Press, 2004, $14.99) is a translation of two German lectures Yoder gave in 1957 on Christians and political responsibility.

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If you don't currently receive the magazine but would like to consider it for small group discussions, call us for a trial issue or request one through our Web site.

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Help send *The Mennonite* to overseas mission workers! Donate to *The Mennonite*'s overseas mission workers and leaders fund. Send donations to *The Mennonite*, OMWL fund, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526.

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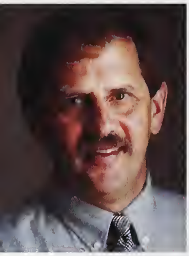

Everett J. Thomas

Honest answers

An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips.
—Proverbs 24:26 (NIV)

We get lots of honest answers at *The Mennonite.* During any given month we receive feedback from readers who offer answers to issues raised in articles and news stories as well as answers to questions not raised by anything we publish. It is wonderful.

However, since January the feedback has been extraordinary. In addition to data from our annual readers survey and the many encouraging—and sometimes critical—notes from those contributing generously to our budget, we received new information about our role in Mennonite Church USA through a national survey entitled "The People in the Pew: Perceptions of Mennonite Church USA" (Feb. 17, pages 20-21). All these kisses are influencing choices we make for this magazine.

Our annual readers survey, conducted each February, is critical to the process of understanding our readers. Asking similar questions every year, we are able to observe trends. For example, we know that men comprise 54 percent of our readership (for the second year in a row); that is a change from 1999 and 2000, when women made up 54 percent of our readership. We also know that our readership is highly educated: 72 percent have a college education or more. But most significant is another statistic: Many of our readers are or have been leaders in the church, including Sunday school teachers (81 percent of our readers) and more than 2,200 ministers. All this shows that the thought-leaders and opinion-shapers in congregational life read—and are influenced by—the content of *The Mennonite.*

We want to do our part to strengthen denominational identity and encourage loyalty to the church.

So what do our readers want in future issues of the magazine? More stories about personal faith. Mission-related articles and Bible studies are the second-most requested.

Such feedback is at odds with others who have a vested interest in what we choose to publish. For example, denominational colleagues want us to run more stories about Mennonite Church USA. They have good reasons: The "People in the Pew" survey revealed that *The Mennonite*—more than any other source—is the primary channel by which members of our church learn about the denomination. However, only 13 percent of our readers want more news about Mennonite Church USA.

Less scientific but more personal feedback comes in the form of financial contributions. Many checks arrive with notes attached. The most common comments are, "Keep up the good work" or, "You're doing a good job." We also get the occasional criticism—especially poignant when accompanied by a financial contribution. The two most persistent complaints: difficulty reading small type on a page with color background and not enough information in the obituaries.

So what difference will all these honest answers mean for *The Mennonite*? We are considering more stories of personal faith and may regularly devote the center spread (pages 16-17) to stories of individuals and congregations that illustrate the church in mission. More difficult to change, however, is the policy on obituaries (a minority of our readers do not want obituaries at all). One possibility: add four pages every other month and permit readers to purchase additional space in an obituary at the usual rates for classified ads.

As the official periodical of Mennonite Church USA, we also want to do our part to strengthen denominational identity and encourage loyalty to the church. Our reasons are not altogether altruistic: We believe that as our new denomination gathers momentum more people will feel positive about the church and, consequently, more members will subscribe to *The Mennonite.*

However, we believe we can contribute to denominational identity while retaining some objective distance in our reporting. In other words, we will continue to describe what is happening throughout the denomination with as much fairness and clarity as possible. That is because each part of the church—whether churchwide agency or school, area conference or Executive Board—also deserves, at times, honest answers.—*ejt*

The Mennonite

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May 18, 2004

Overcoming lopsided Christianity

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When did we see you?

Ron W. Adams is pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? When did we ever see you sick or in prison, and visit you?' And the King will tell them, 'I assure you, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'—Matthew 25:37-40 (New Living Translation)

The tables are set. The coffee is on. The kitchen is full of light and the smells of good food. The foyer is arrayed with folding chairs. Then 5 p.m. comes and we open the doors. Our guests have arrived.

Every Monday evening for the last 2½ years we've received guests for dinner at East Chestnut Street Mennonite. As many as 120 guests gather in the foyer and read the paper, drink a cup of coffee and chat with friends and new acquaintances. Then, after a prayer of thanks, we proceed to the fellowship hall for dinner. It is always a good evening.

We started inviting the community to dinner as part of a program of our local council of churches. The goal was to provide a hot meal every evening for anyone who wanted or needed it. We are grateful to be part of meeting that goal. And we are glad that the council expected churches to offer something more than a "soup kitchen."

We couldn't do this without the help of other congregations. While we host every meal, other congregations provide the food and service several times each month. Mennonites, Methodists and Lutherans help us make Monday evenings special.

The program is called Community Gatherings. And that's how it feels. Members of our congregations and members of our community sit, eat and talk together, offer to pray for each other and laugh, joke and have a good time together. Some stay for the twice-a-month Bible study. Others eat and move along to their next appointment. All enjoy good food, a warm place to relax and eat, and an atmosphere that's friendly, welcoming and gracious.

I say this not to toot our horn. Because none of this would be true were it not for the good grace and warm spirits of our guests. From the beginning we have been embraced as friends and celebrated as sisters and brothers. At first our guests were respectful, in the way people are when in a new place. Over time that respect has continued but is now enriched by the sharing of stories, the repeating of old jokes and those other things we do when in the company of old friends in a familiar place. Every Monday evening is a gift from our guests to us. We are grateful.

It is easy to sentimentalize "the poor," to make assumptions and stereotypes that dehumanize, to consider our own lives essentially better, less impoverished and more normal. I do not want in any way to discount the effects of poverty on individuals and families or to deny the need for Christians to work for an end to social structures that make programs like ours necessary. But I am learning that when we get to know folks whose circumstances are different from our own, we realize that what we have in common is greater than what makes us different.

What we are learning, too, is that welcoming our guests is changing us. Our friends are giving us something more than a plate of food. They are welcoming us into their lives, not as helpers or do-gooders but as friends and neighbors. Together we are creating a holy and blessed community whose boundaries remain open but whose center is the sharing of food and the practice of mutual respect and friendship. A community of love is a beautiful thing.

Just what you'd expect from having dinner with Jesus every Monday evening. TM

TheMennonite

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Mennonite Church USA

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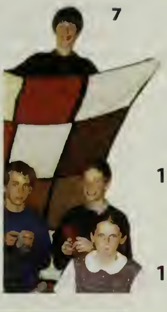

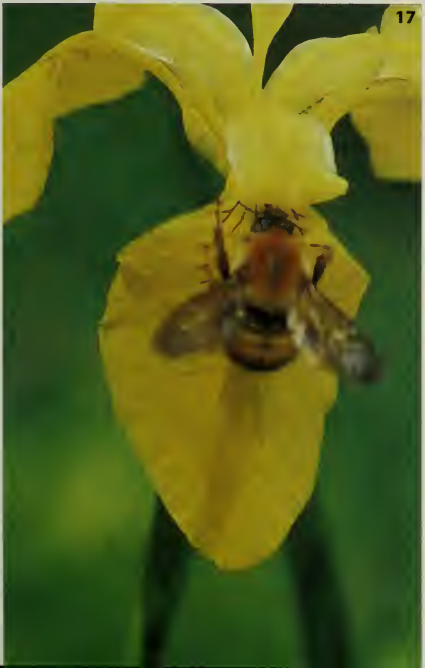

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Give control in Iraq to the U.N.

Too many people are dying in Iraq. Our military actions have obviously not been working; they have only been escalating the death of U.S. soldiers, Iraqis and increasing Iraqi resistance. Doing the same only results in more of the same destruction. If we want a different result we must do something different. The following sound ideas are based on the suggestions from the Institute of Policy Studies: (1) The U.S. administration should offer to relinquish control in Iraq to the United Nations in return for its assistance. (2) The U.S. occupation should be ended and our own troops brought home to safety as soon as possible. (3) This should be paralleled with the entry of U.N. troops into Iraq, charged with providing political assistance, arranging elections and offering humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping as Iraq reclaims its sovereignty. (4) The U.N. troops should, if possible, come from nations that opposed U.S. invasion, since they may be less likely to be attacked. The United Nations should not, however, enter the country until the United States relinquishes power in Iraq. (5) The United States should provide reconstruction funds since we are responsible for the destruction of Iraq's infrastructure. However, we must relinquish control of those funds to the United Nations. The United Nations should administer all reconstruction money, and steps should be taken to ensure that it does not end up in the hands of U.S. corporations. (6) The U.S.-imposed privatization of Iraq's economy should be revoked. Only after a legitimate sovereign government has been created should any reworking of Iraq's economy be undertaken and then by the new Iraqi government itself, not by foreign interests.

If you agree, encourage your senators, representatives, President Bush and John Kerry to accept these recommendations.—*Jim Fitz, Tiskilwa, Ill.*

Reclaim Anabaptist identity

Congratulations to the Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference bishops for making the recommendation that Lancaster Conference join Mennonite Church USA. Having attended the conference sessions, I appreciated bishop Keith Weaver's conference sermon, where he exhorted the Lancaster Conference to reclaim clear Anabaptist identity.

What a shame, though, that Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM), the conference mission board, refuses to consider merging with the denominational mission board (Mennonite Mission Network). What a lost opportunity for partnership, synergy and unity in mission work! Unfortunately, it's our overseas Mennonite sisters and brothers who will suffer the most.

It's also ironic that many of the new churches planted by EMM in North America are the first to say they don't want to join Mennonite Church USA. Is this because so many of EMM church planters and missionaries are non-Mennonites? This is a growing complaint I have heard among Lancaster Conference members.

During his conference sermon, moderator Keith Weaver said, "Lancaster Conference Mennonites have been experiencing a gradual shift in core values, exchanging our Anabaptist values for those of American evangelicalism and fundamentalism." He could have been speaking about EMM.—*Marie Martin, Lancaster, Pa.*

Upon returning to life

Special thanks for Elaine Maust's article "Gone Looking For His Friends" (April 6). The subtitle caught my attention: What does one do upon returning to life?

This is a question I've never felt the need to ponder. But it became the basis for a post-Easter message. We have returned to life, "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved" (Ephesians 2:4-5 NIV).

Jesus sets the example in some things we can do upon "returning to life": comfort the bereaved (Mary), speak peace to the fearful (disciples), help someone to faith (Thomas), prepare breakfast for the hungry (fishermen) and restore a brother to discipleship (Peter).—*Wayne D. Lawton, Elizabethtown, Pa.*

Giving in spite of anxiety

Thank you for Everett J. Thomas' editorial "The Tide Turns" (April 20) that combined an honest assessment of Mennonite Church USA with inspiration to continue a fresh move of God. In regard to the improvement of the financial condition of

IN THIS ISSUE

Mennonites are often divided between those who want to preach a gospel emphasizing peace and justice and those who want to emphasize "a living relation with Jesus Christ," as Ronald J. Sider says (page 8). Sider, however, insists that "the only way to be faithful to Jesus is to put together evangelism and social ministry." Rick Warren's purpose-driven church material is widely embraced in Mennonite congregations, and Goshen (Ind.) College sophomore Jennifer Rupp describes how North Clinton Mennonite Church's use of those materials "created unity and excitement in the congregation" (page 12). But Tom Kauffman (page 15) asks, "Is the PDC movement culture driven or Spirit led?" and cautions that "there is nothing in the PDC model to lead one to become a peacemaker, one of the cores of our faith."—*Editor*

Mennonite Church USA, credit must be given to the many church members who have given over and over again, in spite of the fear, anxiety and suspension of financial support expressed by their sisters and brothers. They have been shining examples of people who give out of love for God and not just for how money is spent.

Credit must also be given to the conference leaders who worked tirelessly to install the firstfruits funding system. These leaders have ensured the viability of the denominational offices even while their conferences were, as Thomas said, "struggling for their own viability and identity." These sacrificial servants deserve visible thanks and support, not just from their congregations but from the denominational institutions that benefited. *—Mark L. Vincent, Mukwonago, Wis.*

God wants us to be happy?

In "Getting Angry With God" (April 20), Ken Gibble asks, "Where did we ever get the idea that God wants us to be happy all the time?"

In a good Bible concordance "gladness" and "joy" are mentioned hundreds of times. Some examples are, "Rejoice evermore" in 1 Thessalonians 5:16 (KJV), "Rejoice and be exceeding glad" in Matthew 5:12 (KJV) and, "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God" in 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

The Psalms and Proverbs have many examples, such as, "I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy" and, "In your name they rejoice all day long" and, "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice."*—Frank Horst, Warden, Wash.*

Messiah for education

In the March 16 issue, Glenn Lehman gave us a critical review of Handel's *Messiah*. To the casual reader, it would appear that this oratorio is second- or third-rate with serious deficiencies. But the *Messiah* is one of the most well-known pieces of George Frederick Handel's works, perhaps even his masterpiece. British citizens, however, may argue otherwise, since Handel's *Zadok the Priest*, which has been sung at every royal coronation since 1727, is his most famous.

An oratorio means "oratory by music." Oratorios were originally designed to educate people about the Bible. Oratorios date back to the Middle Ages, when Bibles were so expensive that few could afford them and fewer still could read them. The texts of the Bible were then put to music, and men were taught to learn and sing them. The *Messiah* does just that, giving the audience some of the greatest truths of the Bible. In fact, after the first production in Dublin in 1742, a friend congratulated Handel on a beautiful piece of "entertainment." "Entertainment!" exclaimed Handel. "That was not written for entertainment; it was written for education."

The *Messiah* can be roughly divided into three sections. The first section has Christ's birth and the fulfillment of prophecy. The second section is concerned with Christ's suffering, death and resurrection. The third section has Christ's final triumph and return. Since the libretto spans a wide spectrum of biblical themes, it can be played at any time during the year, not just at Easter, as Lehman concludes.

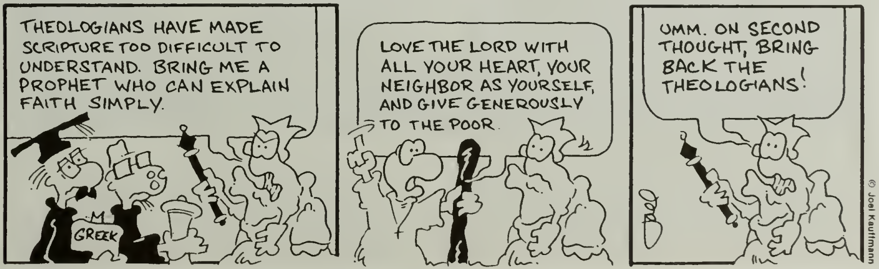
After finishing the majestic "Hallelujah Chorus," Handel said, "I think that I did see all heaven before me, and the great God himself." After the final "Amen," he concluded, "I think God has visited me." Perhaps you will agree with Handel after listening to this superb oratorio.*—Galen Dise, Paradise, Pa.*

Titles are unnecessary

I have noticed in some of your articles that when you give the name of the writer you often give all the degrees they have. I thought we did not believe in titles? Are they meant to impress or give more credence to what they say? I have heard many uneducated preachers speaking the word and moving people. The only title we should strive to have is that of brother or sister.*—Doug Esh, Milroy, Pa.*

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


THEOLOGIANS HAVE MADE SCRIPTURE TOO DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND. BRING ME A PROPHET WHO CAN EXPLAIN FAITH SIMPLY.
GREEK
LOVE THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF, AND GIVE GENEROUSLY TO THE POOR.
UMM. ON SECOND THOUGHT, BRING BACK THE THEOLOGIANS!
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IN BRIEF

Brenneman gets honorary degree

On May 2, MMA president Howard Brenneman received an honorary doctorate in humane letters from the Missionary Church's Bethel College at its commencement ceremony, which was held on the college's campus in Mishawaka, Ind. "With this honorary degree, Bethel College recognizes Mr. Brenneman as a strong leader and a man of faith," said Ann Krafcheck, Bethel spokesperson.

Muslims suffer more harassment

Muslims in the United States experienced more than 1,000 incidents of alleged harassment, violence and discriminatory treatment in 2003, a jump of 70 percent over the previous year, according to a report by the Council on American-Islamic Relations. The report attributed the increase to such factors as Muslim-bashing on radio talk shows and tensions surrounding the war in Iraq.—*The Wichita Eagle* (May 4)

Vietnamese Mennonites protest treatment

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam—Leaders of the Mennonite Church in Vietnam have appealed to the government to release four men arrested March 2.

In a gathering for encouragement and training, 40 Mennonite leaders from many parts of the country signed a "letter of protest" March 31 and sent it to the prime minister and to the Ministry of Public Security.

The letter protested "the entrapment, arrest, interrogation and vicious beating and imprisonment" of four church leaders on March 2 (see April 6 issue, page 23) and the refusal of local authorities to provide any information about the leaders since then.—*Mennonite World Conference News Service*

MMA, others confront PepsiCo about AIDS

PLANO, Texas—At PepsiCo's annual meeting May 5, MMA and other religious investors asked the company (NYSE: PEP) for the second time to review the economic effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on the company's business.

The illness is spreading into Russia and Southeast Asia, where PepsiCo has significant business interests. Research by the World Bank indicates the pandemic has a devastating human toll, including significant damage to the regions' economic and political stability, undermining the future of people who survive and the businesses that operate there.

PepsiCo's chairman and CEO, Steven S. Reinemund, said the company would work with shareholders to develop a report on the pandemic by the end of the year. MMA and other religious shareholders received a 7.7 percent vote in favor of their resolution.—*MMA News Service*

MCC begins search for new executive director

AKRON, Pa.—In response to the announcement that current Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) executive director Ron Mathies will retire in summer 2005, a search committee has been selected to find his replacement.

The six-member committee includes representatives from various MCC governance bodies in Canada and the United States that reflect the denominations of MCC's supporting constituency.

Members are contacting a variety of Anabaptist partners and agencies. Through conversations and surveys, committee members are asking leaders of constituent church denominations and conferences, agencies, mission boards, colleges and universities, as well as MCC staff and boards that represent constituents, what qualities they believe are important for MCC's next executive director.—*MCC News Service*

Hesston student sees dream come true

HESSTON, Kan.—When Luis Padilla received his diploma at Hesston College May 2, he saw a dream come true after 19 years of hard work, taking risks, and the help of God.

Padilla, 37, grew up in San Pedro Sula, the second largest city in Honduras. Because of his family's financial struggles, he says, after sixth grade he worked full-time during the day to pay to go to

Bluffton College photo by Burton Andrews

Dancing in the merry month of May

Bluffton (Ohio) College concluded its academic year with the 104th annual commencement as well as the 94-year-old tradition of dancing around the May pole. The colorful May pole dance, which dates back 2,000 years in Europe, has been part of Bluffton's graduation weekend since 1910. Sixteen first-year students, wearing Germanic costumes, dance in pairs around the pole, weaving streamers together.

Knit together in love

Students at Catskill Bruderhof School display one of the blankets they've knit for earthquake victims in Bam, Iran. The Bruderhof is an international movement of communal settlements dedicated to nonviolence, simplicity and service.

night school, completing high school in 1985.

From 1989 to 1990, Padilla participated in Mennonite Central Committee's International Visitor Exchange Program, spending six months in Souderton, Pa., and six months working in the maintenance department at Goshen (Ind.) College.

He returned to the United States in 1996, and in 2000 joined Plains Mennonite Church, Souderton, Pa., which sponsored him and assisted him with financial aid to attend Hesston.

MWC delegation considers Christian Zionism

JERUSALEM—A Mennonite World Conference (MWC) delegation took part in a conference entitled "Challenging Christian Zionism: Theology, Politics and the Palestine-Israel Conflict," held April 14-18 in Jerusalem and Ramallah.

It was the fifth international conference sponsored by the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem, an organization supported by Mennonite Central Committee. Speakers included Palestinians, Israelis, and internationals concerned about the impact of Christian Zionism.

On April 12-13, the delegation also visited areas affected by the "separation" wall in the northwestern West Bank and met individuals and organizations in the Bethlehem area working for peace and for the witness of the local Palestinian church.

The MWC participants were Mario Higueros, Guatemala City, Guatemala; Albert Ndlovu, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe; and Pastor Romero, August Pine Ridge, Belize.

Higueros came to the conference out of concern about the "very aggressive development" of a Zionist emphasis in the local churches, "especially in Mennonite congregations."—*MWC and MCC news services*

Bluffton begins new master's program

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Bluffton College will begin offering its third master's program—a Master of Business Administration (MBA)—in August. Students will attend class one night a week and earn their degree in two years.

The new program is designed for midcareer people who are well-established in a business organization. Among those benefiting from a Bluffton MBA are accountants, engineers, production supervisors and marketing directors.

The two other graduate programs offered at Bluffton are the Master of Arts in Education and the Master of Arts in Organizational Management.

The college will become Bluffton University on Aug. 1.—*Bluffton College News Service*

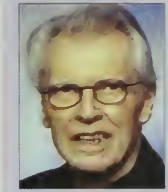
Vada Snider

Stand against gun violence

The fathers of two youths killed by gun violence stand with Robin Miller (middle), pastor of Lee Heights Community Church in Cleveland, April 19 at the public square in downtown Cleveland to serve as a peace witness against the passing of the concealed weapons law in Ohio. The law allows anyone 21 years of age or older who has been a resident of Ohio for at least 45 days to carry a concealed weapon provided they are able to prove they have had competency training in the use of a gun.

IN BRIEF

Habegger



Driedger

Alumni honored

The Bethel College (North Newton, Kan.) Alumni Association will honor two outstanding alumni at Bethel's alumni banquet May 22. Alfred Habegger, Enterprise, Ore., will receive the Distinguished Achievement Award for his scholarly contributions to 19th-century literature. Leo Driedger, Winnipeg, will receive the Outstanding Alumnus Award for his academic career in sociology as well as his writings and church work. The awards have been presented annually since 1960.—*Bethel College News Service*

United States third in executions

The United States ranks third, with 65, behind only China (726) and Iran (108), in reported executions for 2003, according to Amnesty International's annual report on the death penalty.—*The Christian Century*

Overcoming lopsided Christianity

The only way to be faithful to Jesus is to put together evangelism and social ministry.

by Ronald J. Sider

James Dennis and I were leaders together at Diamond Street Mennonite Church in Philadelphia in the 1980s. Before that, James was an angry black militant. In fact, he told me that if he had met me earlier, he might have killed me. I'm glad he met Jesus first. Before that, he was abusing alcohol, his marriage was in trouble and he went to prison for a major crime. In prison he struggled and came to personal faith in Jesus Christ. After he came out, Freeman Miller, at the time pastor of Diamond Street, discipled him. The Holy Spirit put James' life and marriage back together, he got a job, owns a home and is now a pastor at a Mennonite church in Philadelphia.

> **We worship the Eternal Word become flesh. So how on earth can we pull apart word and deed? Yet we've managed to do that in our churches—not only Mennonites but all Christian churches in this nation.**

Does anybody think that all James needed was a better welfare system or a better job-training program? That wasn't enough. He needed a living relationship with Jesus Christ at the core of his being. He needed to be transformed from the inside out. And the Holy Spirit did that.

On the other hand, does anybody think his problems were all solved when he became a born-again Christian, if he could not get a job because he was black and if the schools did not work because his kids were black? He needed Jesus and a job. He needed evangelism and material, social transformation.

We worship the Eternal Word become flesh. So how on earth can we pull apart word and deed? Yet we've managed to do that in our churches—not only

Mennonites but all Christian churches in this nation.

Social sin: I was in South Africa in 1979 to speak to about 5,000 people from all the churches and races. Before that event, I spoke to the annual conference of a white evangelical university movement. I talked about Jesus' resurrection on the third day and about God's concern for the poor and social sin.

I got to know a guy who was Jewish. He was intrigued by the vibrant faith of these white evangelical Christians, and we talked for hours. He had amazing political connections. He was passionately committed to the struggle against apartheid. Once, after a three-hour conversation, he said, "Ron, I'm burned out." That didn't surprise me. He was trying to be a full-time student and a full-time social activist.

Then he said, "God told me that if I came to this conference I would learn something about his Son."

I knew he was Jewish. I said, "You know, I believe Jesus died on the cross for your sins. I believe that he rose on the third day for you."

He said, "I believe all that." But something held him back. He said, "I don't want to be like these white Christians here. They sing about heaven. They talk about the joy of Jesus. But they don't care about justice in South Africa." He thought that coming to personal faith in Jesus would mean losing his commitment to ending the terrible injustice of apartheid.

I said, "Goodness no. Jesus wants to strengthen that. He doesn't want to take it away. It will have to be on his terms, but it will be even more powerful."

He confessed Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior. His face was shining. You can be sure those white evangelicals had invited him to Jesus, probably time and time again. But he couldn't hear it because they didn't care about justice.

Two years later, I was asked to be one of the speakers at the 30th anniversary of the founding of the National Council of Churches in this country. They had a dozen seminars on interchurch affairs, about 15 seminars on peace and justice, but no seminars on evangelism or church planting.

Those two stories illustrate the one-sidedness in the church. Mennonites in the 16th century went all over Europe sharing the gospel and inviting people to personal faith in Christ. They were also concerned with peacemaking and the poor. That balance is in our history. Mennonites should be leaders in combining evangelism and social ministry in the larger Christian church.

I only hire staff who are not only good professionals but also love Jesus with all their heart and want opportunities to invite broken people to personal faith in Christ.

—Wayne Gordon

We have too many lopsided Mennonite congregations. The only way to be faithful to Jesus is to put together evangelism and social ministry.

Another friend, Wayne Gordon, grew up in a small town in the Midwest. After he gave his life to Christ when he was in grade 10, he said, "God, I'll do anything you want me to do with my life."

Inner city: Almost immediately he felt called to the inner city. After college, he went in to one of the poorest neighborhoods in Chicago, Lawndale. It had failing schools, almost no one graduated from high school, and of those who did go on to college, few ever came back to Lawndale. Infant mortality rates approached Third World levels.

Wayne began a Bible club and a recreational club. The guys and their girlfriends came to Jesus. He saw they needed medical care, so he started a

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medical program. He saw they needed tutoring, so he started a tutoring program. He saw they needed housing, so he started a housing program.

Today that's a $13 million per year community center, transforming the neighborhood in all kinds of ways. There are 21 full-time doctors. The infant mortality rates in that section of Chicago have dropped by 60 percent. Federal health officials came in and asked, "Why is this working so well?" More than 100 youth have graduated from colleges and universities, and half are back in Lawndale working to transform the neighborhood.

If you ask Wayne why this works, he says, "You need dollars and good administrative skills and good professionals, but I have hired every person for 20 years, and I only hire staff who are not only good professionals but also love Jesus with all their heart and want opportunities to invite broken people to personal faith in Christ."

There's a church of 1,000 people at the center of that ministry. Most of them have come to Christ in the course of coming to the tutoring program or the medical program. But the doctors and lawyers and everybody else want to lead people to Christ.

I wonder what God would do with 1,000 people like Wayne Gordon and Anne, his wife, who've looked into the face of Christ and said, "We'll do anything you want us to do if you give us the strength."

You cannot fix social problems in our world either with a conservative political agenda that thinks all the social problems are because people make wrong choices about sex, drugs and alcohol or with a liberal political agenda that thinks all our social problems are because the systems are unfair.

One reason we have failed to combine word and deed is that our theology has not been biblical enough. Here are six areas where we could be more biblical in our theology:

1. Sin. Some have focused almost exclusively on personal sin: lying, stealing, adultery. It destroys people, and we should call people to repent. Others have focused on social sin, systems that are bad. You know, slavery was perfectly legal, but it destroyed people by the millions.

The Bible shows us that God cares about personal and social sin. In Amos 2:6, the Lord says, "For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment." Why? They sell the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes. They tricked poor people to get their land and sell them into slavery. Legal but unfair.

They "trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth" (v. 7) and deny justice to the oppressed. God's going to punish them for this. The passage then says, "Father and son go in to the same girl, so that my holy name is profaned."

Sexual sin and economic injustice are condemned in one breath. We see this all through the Scriptures.

You cannot fix social problems in our world either with a conservative political agenda that thinks all the social problems are because people make wrong choices about sex, drugs and alcohol or with a liberal political agenda that thinks all our social problems are because the systems are unfair. You must change people, lead them to faith in Christ, and then the schools have to work, and there have to be jobs.

2. Theology. Marx and Darwin saw people as complex, sophisticated machines, material beings. To change behavior you just change the input, whether it's economic, medical or whatever.

Plato said we have a good soul trapped in an evil body. Christians often have been Platonists and supposed that all we needed to do was deal with the soul and get people born again. The Bible sees people as body-soul unities. We have a spiritual and material side and must deal with both. In the Bible, the body is so good that the Creator of 120 billion galaxies becomes flesh and walks among us. The body is so good that Jesus rises bodily from the dead. The body is so good that when Christ returns, we rise bodily from the dead. And the spiritual side is so important that it's better to lose the whole world than lose a living relationship with God in Christ.

3. The gospel. Jesus defined the gospel as the good news of the kingdom: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news" (Mark 1:15).

The prophets had said that after the nation goes into captivity because of its idolatry and economic oppression, the Messiah will come and bring a right relationship with God, sins will be forgiven in a new way and there will be new relationships with neighbors. There will be peace, and the poor will be cared for. Jesus comes along and says: "I am the Messiah. I'm the one you've been looking for." He addressed both the vertical and the horizontal.

The only way to get into Jesus' kingdom is divine grace. The only way to be accepted by God is because God longs to forgive prodigal sons and daughters as they trust in Jesus at the cross. But there's more to Jesus' gospel of the kingdom than forgiveness of sins. Jesus gathered a community of disciples and that new community lived differently. They cared for the poor and challenged the status quo in astonishing ways.

They challenged demons, cast them out. They challenged the rich and gave to poor people. Jesus challenged the way his society thought about the lame and blind. Jesus challenged male prejudice. He met with women in public. Women traveled with him, provided much of the money for his work. He discussed theology with Mary.

When Jesus talked about the gospel of the kingdom, he meant two things: You only get into Jesus' kingdom by divine grace and forgiveness of sins through the cross, and those being forgiven are entering a new community of Jesus' disciples, where everything is being transformed.

4. Salvation. Many have reduced salvation to me and Jesus, a one-way ticket to heaven. Others reduce salvation to changing society. Jesus has a comprehensive view of salvation that includes forgiveness of sins and what the Holy Spirit does, which is to transform each of us in regeneration and sanctification. "Salvation" in the New Testament even means more than just what happens to each person. It's also what happens in the new body of believers.

Remember the story of Zacchaeus? The wicked tax collector using an unfair system. He comes to Jesus, repents, gives back everything he took wrongly, gives huge amounts to the poor. And what does Jesus say at the end of the story? Today salvation has come to this house. There's not a word in the text about forgiveness of sins. Luke 19 talks about the changed economic relationships as Zacchaeus comes to Jesus and begins to live Jesus' kingdom way.

5. Jesus. If Jesus were just a great prophet and ethical teacher and only one of many ways to salvation, then there's not much point in doing evangelism. But the church has said from the beginning that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, true God and true man. There is no other name given under heaven whereby you and I can be saved.

6. Eschatology. Dwight Moody was a great Christian leader in the 19th century, but he had an image of the world and the future that was fundamentally unbiblical. Moody said the world is a sinking ocean liner, and God had given him a life boat. He was supposed to get as many people off the sinking ocean liner as possible. That's not what the Bible says about the future. Romans 8 says the groaning creation is going to be freed of its bondage and experience the glorious freedom of the children of God.

Revelation 21-22 says the glory of the nations is going to be purged of evil and sin and taken up into the new Jerusalem. God is going to take the best in human civilization, purge it of sin and take it up into the new Jerusalem. I like to say that in the kingdom, I expect to go sailing on an unpolluted Delaware River with my grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

Let me summarize it this way. If sin is social as well as personal, if people are body-soul unities made by the Creator to live in wholesome interdependence with the people in the rest of creation, if the gospel is the fantastic news that the Redeemer has begun to defeat Satan so that God's people are now a little picture of what heaven will be like, if salvation transforms both our relationship with God and our relationships with other believers in the body of Christ, and if that even spills over into the world to make the world a better place, and if the Redeemer, who is the Creator after all, intends at his return to restore even the groaning creation and bring the glory of the nations into the new Jerusalem, if that's what the Bible says, then Christians will not try to escape this world. We'll try to change this world as a sign of the complete transformation that Christ alone will bring when he returns at his second coming. And Christians will also know that we change this world both by leading individuals to personal faith in Jesus Christ and by changing the society around us so people have a more wholesome life.

I like to say that in the kingdom, I expect to go sailing on an unpolluted Delaware River with my grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

My friend, Skip Long, an African-American Mennonite pastor in North Carolina, leads a job training program that is privately funded. A curriculum teaches how to dress and present oneself when looking for a job. A second curriculum on values and character uses the Bible. A Christian mentor attends every person in the program. Most participants either come to faith in Christ or their faith is strengthened. The program works better than secular programs that only try to do the technical, material side of the training.

Loving the whole person the way Jesus did works better and it's obviously the only way to be faithful to Jesus. Let's combine evangelism and social action in a new way for the glory of our risen Lord Jesus.

Ronald J. Sider is professor of theology, holistic ministry and public policy at Eastern Seminary in Philadelphia and president of Evangelicals for Social Action. He has published 23 books, including Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger. This article is adapted with permission from a talk he gave at the Lancaster Conference fall assembly in 2002.

A purpose-driven church

A 40-Day experience brings unity to a diverse congregation.

by Jennifer Rupp

North Clinton Mennonite Church in Wauseon, Ohio, embarked on a 40-day spiritual growth campaign in March and April 2003, utilizing resources created by Rick Warren from Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif. Entitled 40 Days of Purpose, the spiritual growth campaign addresses the question, What on earth am I here for?

The campaign is built around 40 daily readings from *The Purpose Driven Life* by Warren. Participants were encouraged to hear weekly sermons, read a devotional each day, get involved in a small group or class and memorize a simple weekly Bible verse—all focusing on God's purposes.

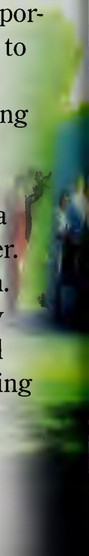
The experience not only developed habits necessary for spiritual growth but created unity and excitement in the congregation through discovering God's purposes.

Special campaign events enhanced the 40-day experience. The kick-off event featured an inspiring videotape message from author Rick Warren. A lay ministry fair showcased opportunities for ministry in the congregation and invited people to become involved. Celebration Sunday, the final event of the campaign, highlighted stories of how God was at work during the 40 days.

Another vital aspect of this campaign was the presence and power of prayer. Three months prior to the campaign, a prayer team was formed to cover the experience with prayer. People prayed for each family participating in the campaign.

How is this program different? The experience not only developed habits necessary for spiritual growth but created unity and excitement in the congregation through discovering God's purposes.

Visible changes: The age range of the participants was tremendous, as high school and college students, young



Skjold Photographs, for illustration only

families and founding members of the church all embarked on the journey together. In fact, 85 percent of youth and adult attendees participated in a class or small group utilizing the 40 Days of Purpose material. This high level of participation led to visible changes within individuals as well as the church family as a whole.

Worship attendance increased during the 40-day campaign, as the average attendance for March and April was the highest in the church's history. One of the largest baptism classes also took place following 40 Days of Purpose, with many inquiries for future baptism and membership classes.

My life purpose is to love Christ, grow and share Christ with others, the church and my family.—Lucy

Even more significant than the increase in numbers of people is the unity and direction this campaign provided for the congregation. Senior pastor Gary Blosser feels that 40 Days of Purpose "helped us sense that we are on the same page, learning about the same vision and affirming the things that we have been doing and will be doing."

North Clinton has experienced many transitions in the last few years, growing from an average of 208 attendees in 1994 to more than 400 in 2002, with 42 percent coming from non-Mennonite backgrounds. With the choice of two worship services, one traditional and one contemporary, and Sunday morning classes meeting concurrently, people felt separated. This campaign united the congregation, as everyone experienced the same readings each day, discussed the same issues in classes and small groups and could relate to each other as all experienced the challenge of living a purpose-driven life.

Participants expressed excitement about the experience. "During these last 40 days, we have seen God at work in our lives," one attendee said. Lucy, a charter member, said, "My life purpose is to love Christ, grow and share Christ with others, the church and my family." Summing up her experience, Kay, a new attendee, wrote, "How I wished I had this concept of faith 50 years ago!"

"Win one more for Jesus" is the emphasis of the evangelism section of the book, which focuses on the purpose of sharing faith and discovering God's mission for your life. Congregation members took this mission to heart as many shared books with families and friends or had witnessing opportunities in ordinary circumstances.

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Gary Rupp was taking advantage of a spare moment to read *The Purpose Driven Life* while waiting for an appointment. The book sparked a conversation about the campaign with another patient, and he ended up giving his copy to his chiropractor.

Another participant experienced a revival at her workplace. She read her book during breaks, which made some co-workers curious. She bought books for them, and the phrase "You need to get the book" became popular around the office.

"I did not fully realize I was here for God," said Kay. "I thought more about me, less about God. Now I'm aware I had it all backward. The statement 'just one more for Jesus' is really powerful."

Darrel King, coordinator of the 40 Days of Purpose Campaign, expressed the sentiments of the campaign team: "It was neat to see how God did work in people's lives, even greater than we expected. To see all the ages come together with the same focus, to see the excitement and hear the personal stories was great."

"I believe this experience brought unity into our lives and into the life of our church," said Carolyn. "It was a 40-day spiritual journey that none of us will ever forget."

Spiritual growth: One of the main goals of this campaign was to develop the habits necessary for spiritual growth. This goal was reached as participants were asked to candidly respond to how they rated themselves on the five purposes of the campaign: worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and evangelism, both before and after the campaign. The rating scale ranged from "I don't know about this purpose" to "I am committed to this purpose as a priority." For each of the five categories, there was a significant increase in the ratings from before the campaign to after, with evangelism being the area in which people reported experiencing the most growth.

As a matter of fact, the material is really quite Anabaptist, especially in the area of fellowship and in Rick Warren's understanding of the church.—Gary Blosser

Mennonite congregations are sometimes uneasy about utilizing resources not published by the denomination. However, a positive aspect of the campaign is its flexibility. "As a matter of fact, the material is really quite Anabaptist," said Blosser, "especially in the area of fellowship and in Rick Warren's understanding of the church. This excerpt from *The Purpose Driven Life* sounds like it's coming straight from the pulpit on a Sunday morning in a Mennonite congregation: 'We are created for community, fashioned for fellowship, formed for a family, and none of us can fulfill God's purposes by ourselves. The Bible knows nothing of solitary saints or spiritual hermits isolated from other believers and deprived of fellowship. The Bible says we are put together, joined together, built together, members together, heirs together, fitted together and held together and will be caught up together.' "

In the fall of 2002, approximately 1,200 churches participated in 40 Days of Purpose. Another 900 congregations began their journey in early spring of 2003, in tandem with North Clinton. The spring campaign began on Easter 2003 with more than 1,000 churches participating. *The Purpose Driven Life* devotional book hit #1 on the *New York Times* bestseller list and is widely available in stores.

North Clinton is not the only Mennonite congregation to utilize this campaign. Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church; Locust Grove Mennonite Church, Burr Oak, Mich.; Sunnyslope Mennonite Church, Phoenix, Ariz.; and South Hutchinson (Kan.) Mennonite Church have all participated in the 40 Days of Purpose campaign. Also having implemented the campaign are Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church and Cape Christian Fellowship, Cape Coral, Fla. Churches planning to embark on their own 40-day spiritual journey in the future include East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Ill.; St. John Mennonite Church, Pandora, Ohio; and Prairieview Mennonite Church, Flanagan, Ill.

The Bible tells us how Noah's life was transformed by 40 days of rain and how David was transformed by the 40-day challenge from Goliath. The disciples were transformed by 40 days with Jesus after his resurrection. Over and over, God used 40 days in significant ways to transform the lives of his followers. And God used a 40-day spiritual growth campaign to transform North Clinton Mennonite Church.

Jennifer Rupp is a sophomore communication major at Goshen (Ind.) College and member of North Clinton Mennonite Church.

To learn more about *40 Days of Purpose*, visit www.purposedriven.com.

Purpose-driven Mennonites

Five characteristics of a faithful community

by Tom Kauffman

Mennonite churches want to be faithful to the teachings of Jesus and the leading of the Holy Spirit. This means following both the Great Commandment ("You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart ...") and the Great Commission ("Go into all the world ...). Given these priorities, what does it mean for Mennonites to be purpose driven?

The Purpose-Driven Church movement has captured the imagination, or at least attention, of many Mennonite congregations. There are several reasons for this. First, PDC tells the story of a growing church. Many of our congregations are interested in growing. To be fair, its lead pastor, Rick Warren, emphasizes health rather than growth. He suggests that healthy churches will grow naturally.

Second, the PDC emphasis brings an intentionality to the life of the church that is often missing. It is too easy for our congregations to be on cruise control, simply doing what they have always done without analyzing why or if it is still effective.

Third, this movement provides handles for how to incorporate new individuals into the faith community. It sees this as essential, not optional, for the church.

Fourth, PDC identifies how people can discover their giftedness and exercise those gifts for the building of God's kingdom.

Mennonites can affirm these reasons for being the church. We have not always done well in growing, choosing to emphasize smallness and the quality of relationships. Too often we have relied on our ethnicity or tradition to define our reason for being. And for a faith community that emphasizes believer's baptism, we sometimes struggle to know how best to incorporate new believers into the faith family. Finally, when it comes to figuring out how to use people appropriately within the faith community, most of us struggle and acknowledge we could use some help.

For all of these reasons Rick Warren's Purpose-Driven Church appeals to Mennonites. Yet Mennonites have often been skeptical of popular movements, trying to remain true to Christ's leading rather than following the current culture. Is the PDC movement culture driven or Spirit led? Are there ways to assess the PDC movement while remaining true to our heritage?

For example, intentionality in church life is good, but about what are we intentional? There is nothing in the PDC model to lead one to become a peacemaker, one of the cores of our faith. We should be intentional about peacemaking in large part because we see Jesus' example and teaching as normative for the way all Christians should live.

While we can affirm Warren's emphasis on a life of discipleship among the faithful, we might ask: What does a life of discipleship look like? How would an outsider know we are following Jesus? And is a faith community to be a transformative organism or merely an effective model of the prevailing cultural scene that markets faith?

How Mennonites answer these questions may suggest ways we may implement the PDC movement in our own context. I do not mean to discard Warren's model, but we should be discriminating as we employ it in our particular settings.

How would an outsider know we are following Jesus? And is a faith community to be a transformative organism or merely an effective model of the prevailing cultural scene that markets faith?

One of the last books that John Howard Yoder wrote during his lifetime offers a helpful framework for dialogue with the PDC movement. *Body Politics* sets out five distinctives common to all renewal movements throughout the Christian era. These characteristics of the renewed church continue to be important. The current Christian culture is shaped by contemporary culture and historical tradition in ways that may or may not keep it faithfully focused on Christ's message and example. If we are to be intentional about something in our church life, we should consider the five characteristics Yoder outlines in his book. He also suggests why we should do so.

These marks of a renewed church are a missional agenda. They provide a tangible, visible witness to the world of an alternate way of functioning and living together. They embody the kingdom work Christ calls us to live. And they provide a way to incorporate people from outside the faith community into this "new creation."

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These five marks form an Anabaptist agenda. They are part of the historical emphases of Anabaptism and represent a radical call to a countercultural existence and witness to the world.

These marks are about church renewal. They share similarity with virtually all the historical church renewal movements. They are ecumenical rather than sectarian.

While the following nomenclature is different from what Yoder uses, I have tried to remain true to the essence of his five characteristics.

1. The faith community is the place where moral discernment and reconciliation take place. Often called the "rule of Christ" because of Christ's words in Matthew 18 about how to conduct life within the emerging faith community, this characteristic emphasizes that reconciliation is a fact of life within the human community. It provides a process for discernment rather than a code of laws that are inflexible. It enables the faith community to discern how to be faithful in its context. The early church discovered it had to decide how to live together in ways for which Jesus had left no specific instructions. Should they add another disciple to replace Judas? If so, how? What happens when the community gets too large and the Twelve cannot carry out all the duties? Whom should they choose to assist them? How? One first gets clarity about the situation, then determines a faithful course of action.

By relying on the Holy Spirit we are acknowledging that in order to hear the Spirit most clearly we must listen to everyone who is led by the Spirit. It is the gathered body of Christ that most clearly hears the Word of Christ.

2. The faith community represents a new economic order. Communion is that radical act of inviting everyone who accepts the lordship of Jesus Christ to gather at one table and share in a common meal with every other member of the faith community, regardless of economic status. As in the wilderness with manna, God provides for all. Eating together at a common table was an act of hospitality. But it also embodied a new economic community. The household ("oikos" in Greek) of God demonstrated how a new economic unit functioned. People left family, jobs and homes to follow Jesus, setting up a new household within the faith community. As Yoder notes, the act of Communion is not only symbolic of this new economic community but partially realizes the new way of life in the sharing of the bread and cup.

3. The faith community represents a new social order. In baptism we find ourselves creating a new social order, no longer bound by the social, cultural or ethnic boundaries that formerly guided our lives. Not only are we new creatures but also a "new creation," as Paul notes in 2 Corinthians 5:17. Again this is not mere symbolism; the church actually embodies this new creation, representing the body of Christ at work in the world. In baptism we are not so much bringing in the kingdom of God as much as acknowledging it has already dawned and witnessing to the world around us of its existence and its nature by the way we live together.

4. The faith community is where all members are gifted and valued. Sometimes referred to as the "fullness of Christ," it is not to be mistaken for "reaching our human potential." Rather it is embracing the new nature we acquire when we join the body of Christ. Every member has a gift, and all are of equal worth. But for the community to thrive there is sometimes a priority to the exercising of the gifts. The focus should not be on the gift possessed but on the origin of the gift, which comes from God.

5. The faith community is the place where the Holy Spirit guides decision making. Sometimes referred to as the "rule of Paul," it offers an alternative to the cultural ways we make decisions (e.g., by majority vote, following Robert's Rules of Order or deferring to a certain hierarchy). By relying on the Holy Spirit we are acknowledging that in order to hear the Spirit most clearly we must listen to everyone who is led by the Spirit. It is the gathered body of Christ that most clearly hears the Word of Christ. We must even listen to our "enemies" because they too may have a Spirit-led word.

These five characteristics of a renewed church share some commonalities with the PDC movement. They are intentional and biblically based. They offer a practical way to live out one's faith, providing a concrete model for discipleship. They offer a visible witness to a countercultural way of living in a world that does not yet fully know Jesus. Like the PDC movement, these emphases enable us to engage in the holy work of experiencing and embodying God's reign here and now, not merely talking about some past history lesson or anticipating some future moment of glory. They may emphasize the corporate nature of the body of Christ in leading and discerning God's will more fully than does the PDC. They also may lift out some of the foundational teachings of Jesus about how we face our enemies in ways the PDC movement does not. Perhaps a conversation between *Body Politics* and the Purpose-Driven Church movement will enable God's people to discover more fully what it means to embrace the Great Commandment and to follow the Great Commission. If so, that will be Good News indeed.

Tom Kauffman is conference minister for Ohio Conference.

Joy

by Julie Cadwallader-Staub

Who could need more proof than honey—

How the bees with such skill and purpose
enter flower after flower
sing their way home
to create and cap the new honey
just to get through the flowerless winter

And how the bear with intention and cunning
raids the hive
shovels pawful after pawful into his happy mouth
bats away indignant bees
stumbles off in a stupor of satiation and stickiness

And how we humans can't resist its viscosity
its taste of clover and wind
its metaphorical power:
we yearn for a land of milk and honey
we call our loved ones "honey"

all because bees just do, over and over again, what they were made to do

Oh, who could need more proof than honey
to know that our world
was meant to be

and

was meant to be
sweet?

Julie Cadwallader-Staub lives in South Burlington, Vt.

Heal the sick and preach about Jesus

Ron Byler is associate executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

For our new church to be the church God wants us to become, we must nurture vital, healthy congregations.

Recently I reread Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission*. I'm for growth and I'm not much of a compromiser. I had forgotten how much more of Warren's advice I could also support.

It's ultimately about church health, not church growth, Warren says. We in Mennonite Church USA are also concerned about the health of congregations.

Warren's purposes of the church—fellowship, discipleship, worship, ministry and evangelism—also ring true for most Mennonites. We think we're good at the fellowship part, and Mennonites hang their hats on discipleship. Worship is gaining in importance among us, and ministry, especially the doing part, comes naturally to many Mennonites.

But when it comes to evangelism, most of us prefer to let our actions speak for us. Our actions are important, but can we also learn to be more vocal about our love for Jesus and each other? We need to invite others into the family of faith.

We say we are a missional church. We want to join in what God is already doing in the world. In our worship and life together, in our ministry and outreach, we give people a glimpse of God's intentions for the whole world. We welcome sinners, love our enemies and want to be different visibly from the culture around us as a sign of what God wants to do in the world.

In a recent survey, more than one-quarter of us already recognizes the missional vision, an ecumenical movement more than 50 years old that has had significant input from Mennonite thinkers and leaders. In developing the survey for our church members, interviews with pastors showed strong support for becoming a missional church. Pastors want to be part of a healthy, growing church—in their own congregations as well as in the broader denomination.

We Mennonites need to recapture the vision of our Anabaptist brothers and sisters centuries ago and learn to share our faith freely. We need to catch the enthusiastic commitment to Christ's way of peace often exhibited by those among us who are newer to the Christian faith. What can we learn, for example, from our fast-growing Hispanic congregations?

After much prayer and discernment, planners for Charlotte 2005, the churchwide youth convention and assembly in Charlotte, N.C., next summer, chose the theme "Can't Keep Quiet," using Acts 4:20 as inspiration.

In the end, being a Mennonite is not about your last name, where you went to school or whether you speak English, Spanish or Indonesian.

In Acts 4, Peter and John are called before the local rulers and religious leaders in Jerusalem for healing the sick and preaching about Jesus. After releasing the apostles from prison, the religious leaders warn them not to speak about Jesus again. But Peter and John reply, "We cannot stop telling about the wonderful things we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20 NLT).

I think most Mennonites would still be indicted with Peter and John on the first charge—we have a good track record for serving others in our communities and around the world. I hope serving others remains a marker for Mennonites for centuries to come, but can the quiet in the land, as we are healing the sick, learn to speak about Jesus as well?

There are many ways to speak about Jesus, but a key way for all our congregations is to be worshiping communities that attract others. Loving God means loving our neighbors enough to invite them to come to church with us.

In the end, being a Mennonite is not about your last name, where you went to school or whether you speak English, Spanish or Indonesian. It's not whether you sing from a blue book or from words on a screen.

What matters for Mennonites is whether we love God with all our hearts and our neighbors as ourselves. It's whether we believe that Jesus died so that we can live. It's understanding that we are Christ's hands and feet to everyone we meet. It's inviting others to be a part of God's movement in the world.

That's both purpose driven and missional.

"We cannot stop telling about the wonderful things we have seen and heard." May Mennonites begin to say this about ourselves and others recognize it as true. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Mennonite prayer: attitude or technique?** —Miriam Frey
- **Prayer is the prescription**—Phyllis Ring

Argentinians develop their own theology

Mennonite workers have walked with indigenous people since 1971.

Willis and Byrdalene Horst

Willis Horst has spent decades observing God's marvels in the Argentine Chaco. He finds inspiration in the faith journey of the Toba people and in the birds inhabiting the trees of their land. The little thornbird searches for the thorniest twigs to build its nest on the very tips of swinging algarrobo branches. This precarious location protects eggs and fledglings from tree snakes and other dangers, according to Horst.

Horst and his wife, Byrdalene, have walked alongside the indigenous people of the Chaco since 1971 in a variety of Bible-centered ministries. The Horsts facilitate Bible circles, inductive studies where interested people gather under a large tree around an open Bible to discuss various texts for several days. Each person is invited to contribute to the community's understanding of the biblical message.

During a recent Bible circle on a Toba reservation about 100 miles from the Horsts' Formosa home, Willis spent three days watching a pair of thornbirds build a nest on an overhead branch with patience and persistence.

"I was struck with the similarity to our own activity—building an indigenous theology from the bottom up," he says. "It's a slow process that depends on the selective use of local materials that may be thorny and hard to fit into place. Toba theology may look untidy and even dangerous to some, but to the Toba, it feels like home—a more comfortable structure to cling to than imported theologies.

Several years ago, Byrdalene Horst was compiling Christmas texts for use in the indigenous churches. The women asked her why she omitted the passage about Rachel weeping over the massacred toddlers and the angelic warning to Joseph to flee to Egypt.

"They know so much pain through the death of children that the story is not complete without these details," Willis Horst says.

"Jesus is like them in that he was hunted, marginalized and mistreated all his life. Therefore, Jesus understands their own mistreatment and comes to their help in times of trouble," Horst says.

Two of the Horsts' ministries are making the Bible available in the Toba, Pilagá and Mocoví languages in written format or on audiocassette tapes and editing Qad'aqtaxanaxanec (Our Messenger), a quarterly bulletin for church leaders.

Byrdalene and Willis Horst are part of an interdenominational team that includes another Mission Network couple—Gretchen and Keith Kingsley, three Argentine families and a German family. The team seeks to strengthen and advocate for an authentic indigenous church and for the recognition of indigenous land rights.

Mennonite missionaries began to work with the indigenous people of the northern Argentine Chaco region in 1943. In the 1950s, their focus shifted from planting Mennonite churches to accompanying emerging indigenous churches. Many of these churches belong to the Iglesia Evangélica Unida (United Evangelical Church).

The Horsts are members of the Fellowship of Hope congregation in Elkhart, Ind., and have four grown children and three grandchildren spread over the two American continents.—*Lynda Hollinger-Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network News Service*

Jesus is like them in that he was hunted, marginalized and mistreated all his life. Therefore, Jesus understands their own mistreatment and comes to their help in times of trouble.—Willis Horst

In the Esteban López compound in Laishi, Argentina, Grandmother Susana continues to watch over her descendents as she has for more than 90 years.

Mike Smith

Graduation time for 1,202 at Mennonite Church USA's colleges and seminaries

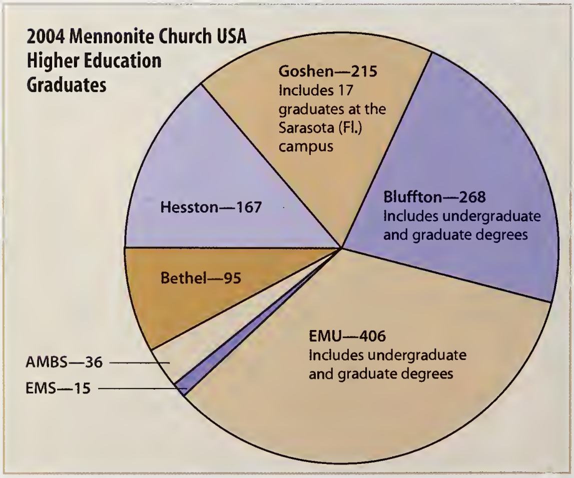
Goshen College graduating seniors Lindsy Diener Meyer (left), Goshen, Ind., and Janice Miller, LaGrange, Ind.

Zac Albrecht

By the end of May, Mennonite Church USA's colleges, university and seminaries will have graduated 1,202 students on seven campuses. While most will have received Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees, some will receive aviation certificates and Master of Divinity degrees.

Commencement ceremonies range from the traditional pinning for nursing students to a traditional May pole dance. One entire graduating class received empty envelopes—no diplomas—as they walked across the stage. Another class will be the last to graduate from its college because next year the school will be called a "university."

Commencement speakers ranged from the nationally famous to a last-minute replacement. One family proudly watched both a son and his mother receive their diplomas together.—*Everett J. Thomas*



Eastern Mennonite Seminary
April 24

Fifteen graduates received three- or two-year degrees at EMS' 56th annual commencement: 12 three-year Master of Divinity, two Master of Arts in Religion and one Master of Arts in Church Leadership. Moses S. Sakuda, a 2000 EMS graduate, consented at the last minute to give the commencement address. Cheryl J. Saunders, senior pastor of Third Street Church of God in Washington needed to cancel the day before EMS' graduation due to her mother's sudden death from a heart attack.

Sakuda, a member of the Masai tribe from a village in Ngong Hills, Kenya, is currently associate director with the mission relationships and witness team of Church World Service in New York City, working primarily with African development. About 20 members and extended family of the Sakuda family sang a traditional Masai music selection during the program.

Eastern Mennonite University
April 25

Members of EMU's graduating class were asked to remember one word from the commencement address: "disponibilite". EMU is in Harrisonburg, Va.

"If you already know the term, you … deserve to graduate summa cum laude," said graduation speaker Martin E. Marty, a distinguished service professor emeritus at the University of Chicago, where he taught 35 years.

The longtime educator, voluminous writer and ordained Lutheran minister described "disponibilite" as "an untranslatable French word that means 'being available … putting myself at the disposal of' or 'making a fundamental engagement which bears on not only what I have, but on what I am, giving credit to another while giving a gift to yourself.'"

Presiding at his first commencement since taking office as EMU's eighth president on Jan. 1, Loren E. Swartzendruber conferred Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science and master's degrees on a record 406 members of the class of 2004. EMU's graduation also included a mother and son—Wonshe (one name only)—from Boulder, Colo., who earned a master of arts in conflict transformation degree and Kai W. Orenic, of Luray, Va., who received a bachelor of arts degree in communication.

Goshen College
April 25

At Goshen (Ind.) College, master storyteller and Christian theologian Walter Wangerin Jr. delivered the commencement address, "For the Sake of Ten':

Commencement activities include traditional pinning ceremonies for nurses, 94-year-old May pole dance, speakers from nationally famous to last-minute.

Saving the World from Destruction," for 198 Goshen College graduates. Wangerin, the Valparaiso (Ind.) University Jochum Professor and writer-in-residence, based his message on the Genesis 18 account of God telling Abraham that for the sake of 10 righteous people he would not destroy the world.

In years past, commencement has been held at the end of May, but the weekend of festivities for graduates and their families was moved up to April 24-25 this year so that seniors who plan to complete their Study-Service Term requirement abroad during the summer were able to walk with their class during commencement services. Thus, all the diplomas this year were empty because nearly all the students will be returning for a month of classes during Goshen College's unique May Term.

Bluffton College
May 2
A record-tying 268 students—the same number as last year—participated in the last "college" graduation before Bluffton (Ohio) College becomes Bluffton University on Aug. 1 (see page 7). Eighteen of the students received master's degrees in education and organizational management.

The commencement speaker, Julia Kasdorf of Pennsylvania State University, empathized with the graduates in their transition from college to career and criticized the expectations put on them by "our goal-obsessed, success-driven, materialistic culture." Kasdorf, who is an award-winning poet and director of Penn State's master of fine arts program in creative writing, encouraged the graduates to tackle their uncertain world by "taking opportunities for risk, imagination and possibility."

Bluffton College ended its academic year with the 104th annual commencement as well as the 94-year-old tradition of dancing around the May pole.

Hesston College
May 2
Guest speaker Ervin Stutzman challenged the 167 members of the Hesston (Kan.) College class of 2004 to "Ask, Seek and Knock," as Jesus taught his disciples. Stutzman, dean of Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va., said these imperatives from Jesus—asking, seeking and knocking—grammatically emphasize continuing action.

"They all speak of initiative, dissatisfaction with the status quo, taking responsibility and active engagement," he said.

Special ceremonies during the weekend included the nursing students' pinning and recognition of those receiving certificates in aviation.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
May 21
On May 21, 36 students are scheduled to graduate from AMBS: 20 with the Master of Divinity degree, six the Master of Arts in Theological Studies, six the Master of Arts in Christian Formation, two the Certificate in Theological Studies, and one each the Master of Arts in Mission and Evangelism and Master of Arts in Peace Studies. Four of the graduates are from outside North America, and two are from Canada. James Schrag, executive director for Mennonite Church USA, will be the commencement speaker. Schrag earned a Master of Divinity degree from AMBS in 1973 and served as a pastor in Kansas and Ohio for 23 years. Although AMBS is located in Elkhart, Ind., the commencement will be held at College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind. AMBS relates to Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada.

Bethel College
May 21-23
Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., will honor 95 graduating seniors and returning alumni during end-of-year celebrations. Commencement is scheduled for May 23, and the speaker will be Bethel College alumnus Daniel Hege, music director of the Syracuse (N.Y.) Symphony Orchestra. The weekend includes a nurses pinning ceremony on May 22. The alumni banquet for graduating seniors and all alumni and friends of the college is scheduled for the evening of May 22.

—Excerpts from each school's news service releases

Michele Hershberger, chair of the Hesston College Bible department, congratulates Justin and Lyz Weaver, Middlebury, Ind., during the commissioning service for Pastoral Ministries graduates. At right are Angel and Luz Maria Campus, Salem, Ore., and John and Kathy Beachy, Kokomo, Ind., currently in the pastoral candidating process.

Larry Bartel

Youth 'starvin' for mission' fast, work

Elizabethtown, Pa., area Mennonite youth help clean up nearby Harrisburg.

Starvin'
for Mission
Starvin'
for Missi

Laura Miller (left) and Chanea Wenger from Elizabethtown (Pa.) Mennonite Church pick up trash on streets near the Harrisburg Discipleship Center during the Starvin' for Mission weekend retreat.

Dale D. Gehman

"Starvin for Mission," kicked off a 30-hour fasting-and-service youth retreat on April 23 with a "Last Supper" at Elizabethtown (Pa.) Mennonite Church. Then the 33 youth and a handful of adult leaders from the six churches were bussed to the Eastern Mennonite Missions' offices in nearby Salunga. After a tour, a presentation of a check to EMM and celebration in song, Chris Epp, director of the Harrisburg Discipleship Center (HDC), challenged the youth "to hunger for the will of God and to finish his work."

The group then drove to HDC, hub for most of the Starvin' activities. Wendell Nofziger, EMM administrator for short-term work in Latin America, taught how to hear the voice of God. After a time of silent prayer and reflection, Phil Minnich, outreach coordinator at HDC, oriented the group to service activities in the neighborhood.

While one group grabbed shovels and rakes for spring maintenance projects around the Center, three other groups scattered into the neighborhood to pick up trash and hand out cold sodas.

"This is the first time I've worked on a 30-hour famine," said Hillary Hess from Goods Mennonite Church in Bainbridge, Pa. "I like it better this way" as she dragged the rusty skeleton of a discarded umbrella from under a pile of leaves on the curb.

"It makes me feel good—like I'm doing something to help," said Lance Nissley, a 14-year-old from Goods, "but it's a never-ending job."

"Come and help us clean up down here," a group of residents called from their porch near 15th and Berryhill streets. "Thanks for what you're doing."

The Starvin' team stopped to chat, handed out free sodas and invitations to visit New Hope Church in Harrisburg, while helping pick up litter from their yards and sidewalks.

The weekend concluded at midnight Saturday—back where it started at Elizabethtown Mennonite Church. The youth paused for final reflections on their experience and prayed with each other before digging into a hearty "Break-fast" prepared by a youth parent and EMM staff.—*Jewel Showalter of EMM News Service*

Native American gathering at site of 1868 massacre

The historical committee of Mennonite Church USA stands with Lawrence Hart on the site of the infamous Washita River Massacre of 1868, near Cheyenne, Okla. George Custer led the Seventh U.S. Cavalry in a surprise attack on Black Kettle's sleeping village. Black Kettle was a Cheyenne peace chief committed to nonviolence. Over his lodge flew an American flag and a white flag, symbols of friendship and peace. Hart's great-grandfather, Afraid of Beavers, was one of the few children who escaped the brutal killing.

The historical committee is planning a Native American conference in 2006 at Clinton, Okla. From left are Lawrence Hart, Beth Graybill, Susan Fisher Miller, Lee Roy Berry, Franklin Yoder, Raylene Hinz-Penner, Kimberly Schmidt and James Juhnke.

John Sharp

Goshen College grad is Fulbright scholar

Kheshgi will learn Hindustani music 'contradictory to anything I have learned.'

During her four years at Goshen (Ind.) College, Rehanna Kheshgi has spent hundreds of hours studying and performing classical Western music, with a special interest in operatic art songs. At the end of August, as a new college graduate, Kheshgi will continue her study of music but will be heading to India for a year as a Fulbright scholar to learn about Hindustani classical music, which is "completely contradictory to anything I have learned," she says.

Kheshgi, of Evanston, Ill., who majored in music at Goshen, is the recipient of one of 13 Fulbright scholarships in India for the next year. She will be based at the University of Delhi for her studies. A program of the U.S. Department of State, with assistance from the Institute of International Education, the competitive Fulbright Program was established in 1946, at the end of World War II, to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries through the exchange of people, knowledge and skills. Around 900 grants are awarded each year to U.S. citizens and students from other countries.

Goshen College

Heading for India: Rehanna Kheshgi

Indian culture is also part of Kheshgi's family heritage; her paternal grandfather was born in India. She has relatives in and near Delhi whom she hopes to meet for the first time while she is in India. Since Christmas she has been studying the Hindi language from an Indian woman who lives in Goshen. While India is home to many English speakers, Kheshgi feels that knowledge of Hindi is important for her to immerse herself in the culture and context of Hindustani music. Kheshgi is the daughter of Janelle Landis and Omar Kheshgi of Evanston. She attends Evanston Mennonite Church.—*Jodi H. Beyeler for Goshen College News Service*

Mennofolk grows

Locations in Kansas and Michigan

For the first time in the four years since it began, Mennofolk will be featured at two locations: Mennofolk on the Prairie at Camp Mennoscah, near Murdock, Kan., and Michiana Mennofolk in southern Michigan.

Mennofolk on the Prairie will be a group-learning, participatory event and include an open stage on Aug. 12, a day of workshops and jamming culminating in a contra dance Aug. 13 and a Shape Note Sing on Aug. 14.

Camp Friedenswald in rural southern Michigan will host the Michiana MennoFolk Festival on July 18. The festival will feature more then 40 Mennonite musicians from more than eight states, Canada and India. They will perform on three separate stages in America's largest gathering of Mennonite musicians to offer a variety of folk traditions communicating modern Anabaptist life and practice. Central District Conference's peace, service and justice committee will sponsor the Michiana Mennofolk. For more information visit www.MennoFolk.org.
—*Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Lancaster Mennonite School

Pennsylvania penny power

Students at Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School-New Danville recently raised more than $300 toward Mennonite Central Committee's Penny Power Project, which helps provide clean and plentiful water to families around the world. This year the school has 189 students enrolled in grades K-8.

New team to lead Illinois Conference

'Power shift' from southern Anglo congregations to urban, multicultural

Ray Nachtigall, pastor at Hopedale (Ill.) Mennonite Church, struggled over whether to identify more with Anglos or with Hispanics. Grace and the late Wilbur Nachtigall— Mennonite Central Committee's first workers in La Plata, Puerto Rico—adopted Nachtigall as a 7-year-old along with three other siblings. They are children of the late Manuel Leon and Maria Dolores Vasquez. Their father struggled as a poor farmer to support his large family, and their mother died giving birth to her eighth child.

When growing up in Anglo settings such as Iowa Mennonite High School in Kalona and Hesston (Kan.) College, Nachtigall submerged his Hispanic roots beneath the Mennonite topsoil of his life. But he's found new peace as an Illinois Mennonite Conference team member with the opportunity to integrate these worlds for the good of both.

"In my earlier years, I tried to deny that I was Puerto Rican," Nachtigall says. "But in these later years I've realized that I need to own who I am. … By being on this team, I feel like I can be a bridge between these worlds. Hispanics don't want to dialogue as much about issues and tend to rely more on the decisions of their leaders."

Illinois Conference delegates unanimously approved the team's creation at their delegate meeting March 26 at Hopedale Mennonite Church. The team—including Hispanics, African-Americans, Africans and Anglos—replaces the conference's predominantly Anglo executive committee.

"The political power in the conference has traditionally come from [south of] Interstate 80, where most congregations are rural white," says Susan Sommer, conference administrator. "But demographics are changing, and more than half our congregations are now north of I-80 in more urban and multicultural areas, such as Chicago."

"We deliberately composed this team to have a strong racial-ethnic representation," says conference minister Wayne Hochstetler. "We believe it's one of the ways that we can say to these people and their congregations that they count and that their ideas and visions matter."

Other team members include Andres Gallardo, pastor of Centro Cristiano "Vida Abundante" in Cicero and leader of a cell-group movement that has drawn about 1,000 members into the congregation—one of the largest Hispanic churches in Mennonite Church USA. Guenetu Yigzaw, another team member and pastor of the Berhane Wongel Ethiopian Church in Chicago, has created videos used in Ethiopian missions throughout the city and worldwide. Team member Elaine Bryant, pastor of Englewood Mennonite Church in Chicago, works inside and outside her small, predominantly African-American congregation on dismantling racism and helping Mennonite Church USA be the diverse church God calls it to be. Roger Kennell, conference moderator, Richard Martin, conference treasurer, and Gary Martin, pastor of Arthur Mennonite Church, round out the team.

A proposal for Illinois Conference to merge with Ohio, Indiana-Michigan and Central District conferences failed in 2002. But the impetus for merger—strengthening and unifying mission efforts—inspired Illinois Conference to restructure.

"We felt God was calling us more deeply into organizing around mission efforts," says Virgil Vogt, former conference moderator. "We wanted people on the team who came from congregations already leading the way."—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

The political power in the conference has traditionally come from [south of] Interstate 80, where most congregations are rural white.—Susan Sommer

Help send *The Mennonite* to overseas mission workers! Donate to *The Mennonite's* overseas mission workers and leaders fund. Send donations to *The Mennonite*, OMWL fund, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526.

Turnaround Churches Bus Tour

A three-day Kentucky tour, July 23–25

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MCC sends aid to Iraq and North Korea

Relief kits for displaced in Fallujah; medicine for burn victims in Pyongyang

Relief kits donated by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) supporters are now providing much-needed aid to those displaced from the battle-stricken Iraqi city of Fallujah, the focal point of recent clashes between U.S. and Iraqi combatants.

"Fallujah residents have sought shelter in Baghdad, away from the conflict areas," notes Alia Khalife of CARE, the agency distributing the kits in Iraq. "They often come to mosques for help."

At the request of Muslim leaders, families living near the mosques have taken displaced people into their homes, and the kits—including towels, hygiene products and first-aid items—supplement what they can offer.

As of mid-April, CARE and Premiere Urgence, another MCC partner in Iraq, had distributed more than 3,600 relief kits to four mosques and other sites where displaced people had gathered. CARE staff are monitoring the situation and providing additional kits to the mosques as needed.

North Korea: In response to the deadly April 22 train blast in North Korea, Mennonite Central Committee is contributing $10,000 toward the purchase of badly needed medical supplies, including antibiotics, tetanus shots, topical creams, IV fluids and pain relievers.

The 280 kilograms of supplies were purchased in Hong Kong and carried into North Korea on April 27 by Willie Reimer, director of MCC Food, Disaster and Material Resources, and other members of a Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) delegation who were in Beijing, China. The supplies were turned over to World Health Organization representatives in Pyongyang.

The medicines are meant to replenish supplies depleted by the emergency in Ryongchon county, North Pyongan province, where on April 22 a train explosion killed more than 150 people and injured more than 1,000. Estimates are that 1,850 homes and a large number of public buildings were destroyed or damaged.

"This many burn victims in any one place would put a strain on any health-care system," says Betsy Headrick McCrae, director of MCC's East Asia programs. "But in North Korea, you're having it happen on top of a severely strained health system that's working with very limited resources."

"Hospitals and clinics, especially outside Pyongyang, have been struggling to have enough supplies anyway," McCrae says.

Caritas-Hong Kong, a Catholic relief agency and partner of MCC in shipping aid to North Korea, coordinated the purchase of the supplies.

MCC has provided emergency relief, including school kits and newborn kits and canned meat, to North Korea since 1996. A shipment of school and hygiene kits is planned for later this year. During the past year MCC shipped 171,144 cans of beef, turkey and pork valued at $599,000 U.S. to children in North Korean orphanages, pediatric centers and other child-care centers.

To make a donation to the North Korea Emergency appeal, in the United States call 877-517-5673.—*MCC News Service*

This many burn victims in any one place would put a strain on any health-care system. But in North Korea, you're having it happen on top of a severely strained health system that's working with very limited resources.
—Betsy Headrick McCrae

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CALENDAR

12th annual **Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival,** June 13-20. For more information go to www.emu.edu/bach. Tickets available at **EMU** box office; 540-432-4582.

Mennonite Senior Sports Classic, sporting events for older adults (age 50 and up) held at ***EMU*** (university commons and athletic fields) and Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, June 17-18. More information, contact Greg Becker at 540-432-4662.

Summer Institute for Spiritual Formation, *Eastern Mennonite University,* June 14-25. For more information call Eastern Mennonite Seminary, 540-432-4260.

Virginia Mennonite Conference Assembly and Youthfest on ***EMU campus,*** July 8-11. Inspiration/worship, workshops, missions festival, special music, children's activities and more. For more information go to www.vmconf.org/assembly.

WORKERS

Shreiner, Mary Ann, ended April 18 as pastor at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Shreiner, Robert "Bob", ended April 18 as pastor at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Baloo, Gunnar Isaak, April 21, to Jessica Baloo, Newton, Kan.

Banspach, Jacob Henry, Feb. 26, to Jim and Mary Brownlee Banspach, San Antonio.

Bert, Evan Miller, April 16, to Daryl and Carrie Stambaugh Bert, Austin, Texas.

Boliver, Isaac Steven, April 13, to Loren and Barbara Barr Boliver, Lowville, N.Y.

Brown, Alicyn Renee, April 12, to Joe and Shannon Brown, Archbold, Ohio.

Dunda, Wil Thomas Leon, April 10, to Gary and Heather Moyer Dunda, Baltimore, Md.

Ewert, Hannah Lyn, March 31, to Traci Ewert, Wichita, Kan.

Guhr, Kaleigh Joy, March 8, to Curtis and Crysta Hill Guhr, Moundridge, Kan.

Kroeker, Adam Norman, Feb. 10, to Stan and Jennifer Rowland Kroeker, Emporia, Kan.

Litwiller, Samuel Chase, April 8, received for adoption April 16 by Greg and Sue Grawe Litwiller, Hopedale, Ill.

McBeth, Kaliyah Marjorie, April 13, to Juliys and Brandy Hofer McBeth, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Miller, Clint Ezekiel, April 11, to Chad and Carmen Heatwole Miller, Harrisonburg, Va.

Miller, Preston Michael, April 8, to Sherlin and Janelle Yoder Miller, Middlebury, Ind.

Moyer, Morgan Joelle, April 4, to Kieth and Mashelle Mummau Moyer, Thompsontown, Pa.

Ness, Christian Ulrich Herr, March 4, to Steven and Jonel Herr Ness, Lancaster, Pa.

Pullman, Grace Kathryn, March 30, to Kevin and Abby Dillon Pullman, Lino Lakes, Minn.

Thompson, Ashley Rose, April 8, to Kevin and Terri Zook Thompson, Pine Grove Mills, Pa.

Unzicker, Sophia Helen, April 7, to David and Jenelle Basinger Unzicker, St. Louis, Mo.

Weaver, Melia Loree, March 11, to David and Dawn Hochstetler Weaver, Appleton, Wis.

Yoder, Kaylee Anne, March 27, to Josh and Jewel Lehman Yoder, Engelwood, Colo.

DEATHS

Baker, Paul, 77, Springs, Pa., died March 29. Parents: Earl and Rosella Ash Baker. Funeral: April 1 in Grantsville, Md.

Burkey, Darold, 79, Milford, Neb., died April 5. Spouse: Imagene Burkey. Parents: William and Jemima Stutzman Burkey. Children: Char Roth, Debbie Roth, Keven, Ed, Carrie Borgmeyer; 12 grandchildren. Funeral: April 8 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

Campbell, Naomi Heatwole, 91, Harrisonburg, Va., died March 15. Spouse: Lester B. Campbell (deceased). Parents: Walter J. and Nora Harlin Heatwole. Children: Carolyn C. Slabaugh, Miriam C. Elliott; three grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 19 at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Cowles, Victor Norris, 88, Pulaski, Iowa, died March 7. Spouse: Ethlyn Lola Fawcett (deceased). Parents: Edward and Linda Sloanaker Cowles. Child: Edward Ross; three grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 13 at Wagler Funeral Home, Bloomfield, Ind.

Headrick, Clara Esch, 78, LaJunta, Colo., died March 18 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Melvin Headrick. Parents: C.D. and Mina Esch. Children: Betsy McCrae, Susan Wheeler, Mary Beth (deceased), Christina, Rachel Boehs, Donna (deceased); eight grandchildren. Funeral: March 22 at East Holbrook Mennonite Church, Cheraw, Colo.

Hooley, Ernest Franklin, 88, Goshen, Ind., died April 25 of cancer. Spouse: Anna Grayce Miller Hooley. Parents: Noah J. and Sovilla Blough Hooley. Children: Rita Troyer, Delmar, Marsha Hooley Miller, Cecilia Wyse, Eric, Brenda Nebel; 15 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 29 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind.

Hoover, Beatrice M. Rohm, 89, Lancaster, Pa., died April 12. Spouse: Herman L. Hoover (deceased). Parents: Frank and Lucy Mullen Rohm. Children: Betty Jane Gonzalez, Ella Mae, H. Lee, Kenneth L.; seven grandchildren. Funeral: April 15 at Groff Funeral Home, Lancaster.

King, Naomi Y., 95, Paradise, Pa., died March 24. Spouse: Valentine King (deceased). Children: Pluma Hostetter, Rose Saylor, Joseph, Susanne, Paul, Parke, Nathan, Merle, Linford; 40 grandchildren; 100 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 27 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

Kolb, Donald C., 71, Springs, Pa., died April 21. Spouse: Betty Hostetler Kolb. Parents: Edwin and Elva Gelnett Kolb. Children: Kathryn Sanner, Debra Thomas; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 24 at Springs Mennonite Church.

Calling all "over-50s" health and fitness enthusiasts!

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Older Adults Living with Spirit

Layman, Earl Joseph, 93, Harrisonburg, Va., died Feb. 29. Spouse: Arbelia Frances Swartz (deceased). Parents: Charles F. and Lily Good Layman. Child: Neal S.; two grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; four step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 7 at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Meyers, Paul W., 72, Souderton, Pa., died April 18. Spouse: Evelyn Alderfer Meyers. Parents: Rev. Claude and Mary Wismer Meyers. Children: Yvonne Bishop, Joy Lapp, Renee Patterson, Beth Rittenhouse, Quintin, Timothy, Tracy; 23 grandchildren. Funeral: April 23 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Miller, Vernon, 61, Hartville, Ohio, died April 17. Spouse: Marilyn Miller. Parents: Mose and Edna Miller. Children: Lynn, Kim Slemmer, Rochelle Mang, Brian; eight grandchildren. Funeral: April 20 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Newcomer, Maxine Myers, 85, Goshen, Ind., died April 14 of cancer. Spouse: Franklin Newcomer (deceased). Parents: Aaron and Clara Weldy Myers. Children: Donald, Keith, Myrna Gerber, Gene; eight grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 18 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind.

Pawling, Loren Keith, 31, Boon, N.C., died April 16. Parents: Ronald C. and Nancy J. Good Pawling. Funeral: April 21 in Lititz, Pa.

Ramer, Charles, 68, Duchess, Alberta, died Dec. 25 of cancer. Spouse: Ruth Brubaker Ramer. Parents: Clarence and Ethel Martin Ramer. Children: Armand, Ginny Juss, Rosie Snider, Priscilla Holt, Susie Thiele, David; nine grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 30 at Duchess Mennonite Church.

Rinner, Andrew James, 80, North Newton, Kan., died April 27. Spouse: Esther Lehrman Rinner. Parents: Arnold and Mabel Eicher Rinner. Children: Jeanette Grantstein, Amy Dueckman; five grandchildren. Funeral: April 30 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Roth, Maynona Troyer, 94, Goshen, Ind., died April 5. Spouse: (1st) Joseph A. Ranallo (deceased), (2nd) Dwight A. Roth (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Della Miller Troyer. Step-children: Nancy Hutchison, Janet Bradford, Vicki Mast; eight step-grandchildren; 16 step-great-grandchildren; one step-great-great-grandchild. Funeral: April 8 at Yoder-Culp Funeral Home, Goshen.

Ruth, Ida G., 89, Telford, Pa., died April 15. Parents: Norman G. and Alverda Godshall Ruth. Child: Larry; two grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 24 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Schrock, Levi, 80, Goshen, Ind., died March 29. Parents: Daniel and Lydia Miller Schrock. Children: Carol Ann Newhard, Marilyn Kay Mathews, Betty Snyder, Ruby Elliott, Donald R., Steven L., Jon A.; 16 grandchildren. Funeral: April 2 at Benton Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Siebert, Anna Peters, 94, Henderson, Neb., died April 1. Spouse: Peter P. Siebert (deceased). Parents: John D. and Katharina Weiler Peters. Children: Darlene Janzen, Darrel, Elvin, Esther Fox, Carol Epp, Aldena; 10 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 5 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Stuckey, Mary L., 97, Archbold, Ohio, died April 23. Parents: Peter J. and Anna Short Stuckey. Funeral: April 27 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Toth, Patrick, 50, Harleysville, Pa., died April 11. Parents: Frank and Ruth Toth. Funeral: April 15 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville.

Tyson, Harold, 78, Sarasota, Fla., died Feb. 17. Spouse: Esther Tyson. Parents: Elmer and Cora Tyson. Children: Karen K., D. Rex; one grandchild. Funeral: Feb. 20 at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Wasser, Marvin H., 79, North Newton, Kan., died April 21. Spouse: Betty Regier Wasser (deceased). Parents: Mahlon and Bertha Hockman Wasser. Children: Dave, James, Nancy; six grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: April 24 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Weaver, Ivan K., 88, Goshen, Ind., died April 23 of cancer. Spouse: A. Lois Yoder Weaver. Parents: Mahlon S. and Clara Blosser Weaver. Children: Stanley, Robert, Carl, Dale, Dennis, Gary; 16 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 26 at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Wittmer, Willis H., 81, Sarasota, Fla., died Feb. 26. Spouse: Mattie Yoder Wittmer. Parents: Henry and Elizabeth Miller Wittmer. Children: Lawrence, William, Elizabeth Lapp, Neoma Troyer, Louise Miller, Willis, Kenneth; 15 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; three step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 29 at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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Blossom Hill Mennonite Church, a growing congregation of 100+ in suburban Lancaster, Pa., seeks applicants for new half-time ***associate pastor*** position. Anabaptist commitment, gifts in discipling believers, developing small groups and community outreach; good interpersonal and organizational abilities. Contact Jon Unger Brandt at jubnlub@yahoo.com or 717-393-3029.

Filer Mennonite Church, in south-central Idaho, a stable and mature congregation of 50, is looking for the ***pastor*** that God has prepared for us. All inquiries treated with respect and confidentiality. Gary Hooley, chair, pastor search committee, 3575 N 2300 E., Filer, ID 83328; 208-326-5245.

Living Water Community Christian Fellowship is a dynamic 23-year-old congregation in New Hamburg, Ont. New Hamburg is a growing community 20 minutes from Kitchener-Waterloo. We are looking for a full-time ***pastor*** sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading, seeking to build relationships in our community. We have a contemporary style of worship, a vibrant small group program, an active outreach into our community. Starting date is January 2005. Living Water is part of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. Closing date is June 30.

For further information contact Muriel Bechtel, MCEC, Kitchener, Ont.; phone 519-650-3806; fax 519-650-3947; or Living Water Fellowship, 519-662-3300.

Light of Life Mennonite Church seeks part-time ***pastor*** to lead growing 10-year-old multicultural church at Farmington, N.M. Located in the northwest corner of the state, Farmington lies at the edge of the Navajo reservation, near the Four Corners, an hour from the nearest ski resort and near many world famous cultural and geographical wonders. Applicant should have calling to serve in preaching and teaching, encouraging and discipling new believers.

Contact Dan Spare, chair, Search Committee, 3808 Country Club Drive, Farmington, NM 87402; phone 505-324-8288; email mdspare@asae.org.

Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio, is seeking candidates for the full-time position of ***minister of youth.*** Candidates should have strong Anabaptist beliefs and have a passion for children, youth and young adults. Full job description is available by contacting Kelvin Friesen at 419-445-0856 or kelfriesen@rtecexpress.net.

Freeport Mennonite Church, a rural church with close proximity to Madison, Wis., and Rockford and Chicago, Ill., is seeking a full-time lead **pastor.** Position available immediately. Average attendance approximately 90-110. Desire individual with strong preaching, teaching ministry; someone with a vision for growth.

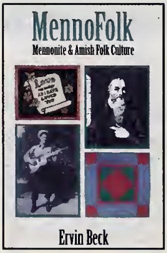
If you feel God's leading to discuss this position with us or can recommend someone else, contact Mike Murray, Search Committee chair, 815-449-2354; jeanettemurray@juno.com.

Niagara United Mennonite Church in beautiful Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., requires a full-time senior ***pastor,*** to work with a pastoral team, for a 600-member congregation. Candidate should be an enthusiastic individual willing to provide spiritual leadership and guidance and committed to an Anabaptist understanding of faith.

For more information please contact Search Committee, R.R.#2, 1775 Niagara Stone Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0; sigwiens@vaxxine.com.

Mennonite Home Communities has an opening for a part-time ***chaplain.*** This position is responsible to assist in providing spiritual guidance, counseling, preaching, teaching and worship experience and supportive visitation for the residents of Woodcrest Villa and Mennonite Home. Qualified candidates will have clinical pastoral education and/or previous experience in pastoral ministry or chaplaincy. Please submit resumés to Tamarah Martin, Director of Human Resources, Mennonite Home Communities, 1520 Harrisburg Pike, Lancaster, PA 17601; or email tmartin@mennonite-home.org; phone 717-390-7989.

Summer Releases from Herald Press



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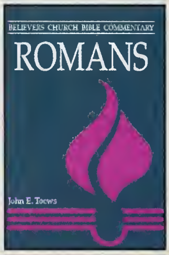

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For more information visit our Web site at www.emu.edu. Send letter of application, resumé and three references to Human Resources Office, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; 540-432-4108 or hr@emu.edu. People who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

Argentina Mission Partnership. Argentine Mennonite Conference (IEMA) invites Mennonite Church USA congregations into collaboration with the ***Missionary Project of Northern Argentina (PROMINOA).*** Its vision is to bring people to Christ and plant churches in two zones north of Buenos Aires. Mennonite Mission Network seeks congregations interested in this or other global mission partnerships to contact Dean Heisey at 866-866-2872 or Partnership@MennoniteMission.net. Together we will forge effective mission collaboration between Mennonite Church USA's Mission Network, IEMA and your congregation. Partnership opportunities are also available in Africa and Asia, and your suggestions for new partnerships are welcome.

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The **Central California Mennonite Residential Services board of directors** is pleased to ***announce the appointment of Amanda Guajardo*** to serve as the new executive director of CCMRS. She has recently held the position of regional coordinator of the Blind Babies Foundation for five counties in the central valley. She has served in different capacities with Exceptional Parents Unlimited (Fresno) and Small Wonders Educational Center, Santa Ana. She is currently working on a master's degree in special education: administration at San Francisco State University. The mission of CCMRS is Christ-centered partnering with people who have developmental disabilities through holistic supported living services.

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Anabaptists! ***Anabaptist Connections*** newsletter available. Newsletter reviews Swiss-Anabaptist reconciliation status and timely articles. Also the book *Rekindling the Anabaptist Flame.* $10 P.P.D. Phone 406-293-2442 or 406-293-2980; HCR61 Box 140RD, Bonners Ferry, ID 83805.

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The courage of curiosity

Gordon Houser

When Jesus told his disciples they must "become like children" (Matthew 18:3), did that include exhibiting children's curiosity? Is it a holy thing to ask questions, even about one's beliefs? Is it simply bothersome? Or is it a sign of disrespect?

Irshad Manji, a Muslim woman in Canada, thinks it's both holy and healthy to question one's religion. Saying so, however, has garnered her death threats from other Muslims.

I heard this dynamic speaker last month in Toronto at the annual convention of the Associated Church Press, the oldest religious press association in North America, to which *The Mennonite* belongs.

Author of *The Trouble With Islam* (Random House, 2003), Manji pointed out that while other religions, such as Judaism and Christianity, allow, even encourage, interpretation and debate, only in Islam is literalism mainstream. The Koran is considered a perfect book, even by moderates. It is memorized and recited but not to be interpreted or even translated, except by non-Muslims.

Meanwhile, terrorist actions, slavery in Islamist regimes, Jew-baiting, the demeaning of women and other human-rights violations in the name of Islam go on unquestioned by other Muslims, she said.

She writes in her book: "Will we remain spiritually infantile, shackled by expectations to clam up and conform, or will we mature into full-fledged citizens, defending the very pluralism of interpretations and ideas that makes it possible for us to practice Islam in this part of the world?"

Most Muslims don't come forward to criticize Islamic terrorists and other injustices because they fear reprisal. Manji has encountered groups of Muslims staring her down when she speaks. She has also been told she will be killed for her actions. She remains unafraid and keeps speaking out.

'Ijtihad': Women were not always treated poorly in Islam, she told us, and interpretation and questions used to be encouraged. Manji discovered in her study of Islam an early tradition called "ijtihad," which encouraged independent reasoning. She learned that women weren't always treated so poorly in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad's first wife was a wealthy merchant, and he worked for her.

Because of the political freedom in the West, Muslims here are in the best position to practice ijtihad, she said. However, most Muslims don't know how to debate their faith and express dissent.

Non-Muslims have a key role to play, she said, in promoting dialogue. What has tended to happen, however, is either silence or bashing Islam for being non-Christian.

I suppose many Christians are silent because they don't want to be seen as disrespectful. Some have been labeled anti-Semitic for criticizing the policies of Israel and are therefore reticent about criticizing Muslims.

My own experience with Islam has been with Muslims who were kind, hospitable, peace-loving. Yet an image people have via the media is of shouting, violent crowds yelling, "Death to America."

Perhaps part of our role is to befriend Muslims and learn about their beliefs. We Christians also have much to learn about dissent within our own ranks. We also have a strong tendency to polarize issues and people. Manji said, "Faith is not threatened by questions; dogma is." Do we believe that? Can we learn to disagree amicably with one another? Can we hold our beliefs without damning others who hold different ones?

Messages: Manji ended her talk by mentioning "three messages of Islam":

1. Only God knows truth.
2. Only God can judge people.
3. Our resulting humility is what allows us to truly worship God.

These are translatable to other religions, including our own. Let us follow Jesus' challenge to become like children, express our curiosity and ask questions in order to learn humbly.

Manji welcomes questions, which you may ask at her Web site: www.muslim-refusenik.com. TM

BOOKS

Two recent books highlight icons: **The Dwelling of the Light: Praying With Icons of Christ** by Rowan Williams (Eerdmans, 2004, $16) and **Light from the East: Icons in Liturgy and Prayer** by Michael Evdokimov (Paulist Press, 2004, $16.95). While Anabaptists were historically iconoclasts, many Mennonites find the use of icons helpful in their prayer life. Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, reflects on four icons of Christ, which, he writes, "show a life radiating the light and force of God." Evdokimov, a Russian Orthodox priest, presents 13 icons and accompanying prayers used in the church's cycle of feasts, then discusses the use of icons in prayer. In an Afterword he discusses questions often asked about icons.

Perhaps more accessible is **Eternal Seasons: A Liturgical Journey with Henri J.M. Nouwen**, edited by Michael Ford (Sorin Books, 2004, $18.95). These excerpts from Nouwen's writings follow the church year.

FILMS

Monsieur Ibrahim (not rated, in French) is one of the more spiritual films I've seen in years. In Paris in the early 1960s, a 16-year-old Jewish boy becomes friends with a Muslim shopkeeper, a Sufi who dispenses gentle wisdom. When the boy's father abandons him, the shopkeeper adopts the boy and takes him to his home country of Turkey, where they visit places of prayer. The boy learns grace and kindness that goes beyond religious ritual.

VIDEOS

The Gospel of John (PG) uses Today's English Version of the entire Gospel as its script. With its long speeches, this Gospel does not lend itself well to drama, but it is a good resource for introducing John. A helpful note at the beginning places the Gospel in its context, which helps address concerns about anti-Semitism. Congregations may want to have this on hand.

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Everett J. Thomas

God is our Advocate

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever.—John 14:16a

Apparently our church does not think much about God as Advocate. Our literature seldom mentions the third member of the Trinity which Jesus promised in John 14. Pentecost—which most congregations will observe on May 30—is the one day we talk much about the Holy Spirit. But most Pentecost Sunday sermons focus on that miracle in Acts 2 when God's Spirit enabled believers of many languages to worship together.

If we want to be relevant to the Christian church of the future, however, we will need to develop a new awareness to God's Spirit moving in our midst. We will also need to become more comfortable using spiritual language in general.

Hugh McCullum, a veteran religion journalist who just returned from 13 years of living and reporting on religion in Africa, made this point in a plenary address to the Associated Church Press convention April 20. McCullum confirmed what many are saying: The Christian church in the global South—already the majority of Christians around the world—experiences a relation to the Holy Spirit and the spirit world that is profoundly different from our experience. Therefore, it will not be long until our brand of Christianity—with its underdeveloped view of the Holy Spirit doing battle with principalities and powers—will be irrelevant.

Imagine what would happen if we allowed God's Spirit to advocate for each of us and our congregations.

An important Mennonite Church USA teaching tool, listing "Habits of the Missional Church," illustrates how our resources often ignore the Holy Spirit and the spirit world:

- Practice God's presence and care.
- Turn, repent and receive God's grace.
- Seek to do what Jesus is doing.
- Weave strangers into the fabric of fellowship.
- Proclaim forgiveness, justice, truth and peacemaking.
- Seek to say what Jesus is saying.

Developing each of these habits will move us all toward becoming a missional church. But we also need to strengthen a seventh, additional habit: discerning God's Spirit, which constantly moves around and in us while confronting the evil one.

Another example of this lack of interest in the Advocate comes from a resource becoming popular in Mennonite congregations: the purpose-driven church material (see pages 12-16).

When I worked through Rick Warren's *The Purpose-Driven Life* (Zondervan, 2002), I was warmed by the straightforward way he confronted a pervasive modern heresy: that we can discover the purpose for our lives by looking inside ourselves. Many Mennonite congregations and members are being renewed by following the path Warren lays out. But the "purpose-driven" material is another example of how little we in the West think about the Holy Spirit and the spirit world. Not one of Warren's 40 chapters (a chapter for each day of the 40-day discipline) teaches anything about listening to the Holy Spirit.

Recently, however, two institutions related to Mennonite Church USA have addressed issues related to the Holy Spirit in the global South as well as in pastoral care. Eastern Mennonite Missions, the mission agency of Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference, helped sponsor a conference on the Holy Spirit in mission in Ethiopia last summer before Mennonite World Conference in Zimbabwe. In a recent conference on "healing for hard cases," Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., included "deliverance ministry" as one form of pastoral-care response.

In the spiritual world so easily understood by Christians in the global South, the Holy Spirit is experienced as God's comforting presence amid spiritual warfare. This Spirit is the all-powerful essence of the wild and untamable God we serve. This is God with us—Emmanuel—in every minute and with our every thought. This Advocate is the essence of God's presence.

On May 30, during Pentecost worship, imagine what would happen if we allowed God's Spirit to advocate for each of us individually, for each of our congregations, for Mennonite Church USA and for the church in the West.—*ejt*

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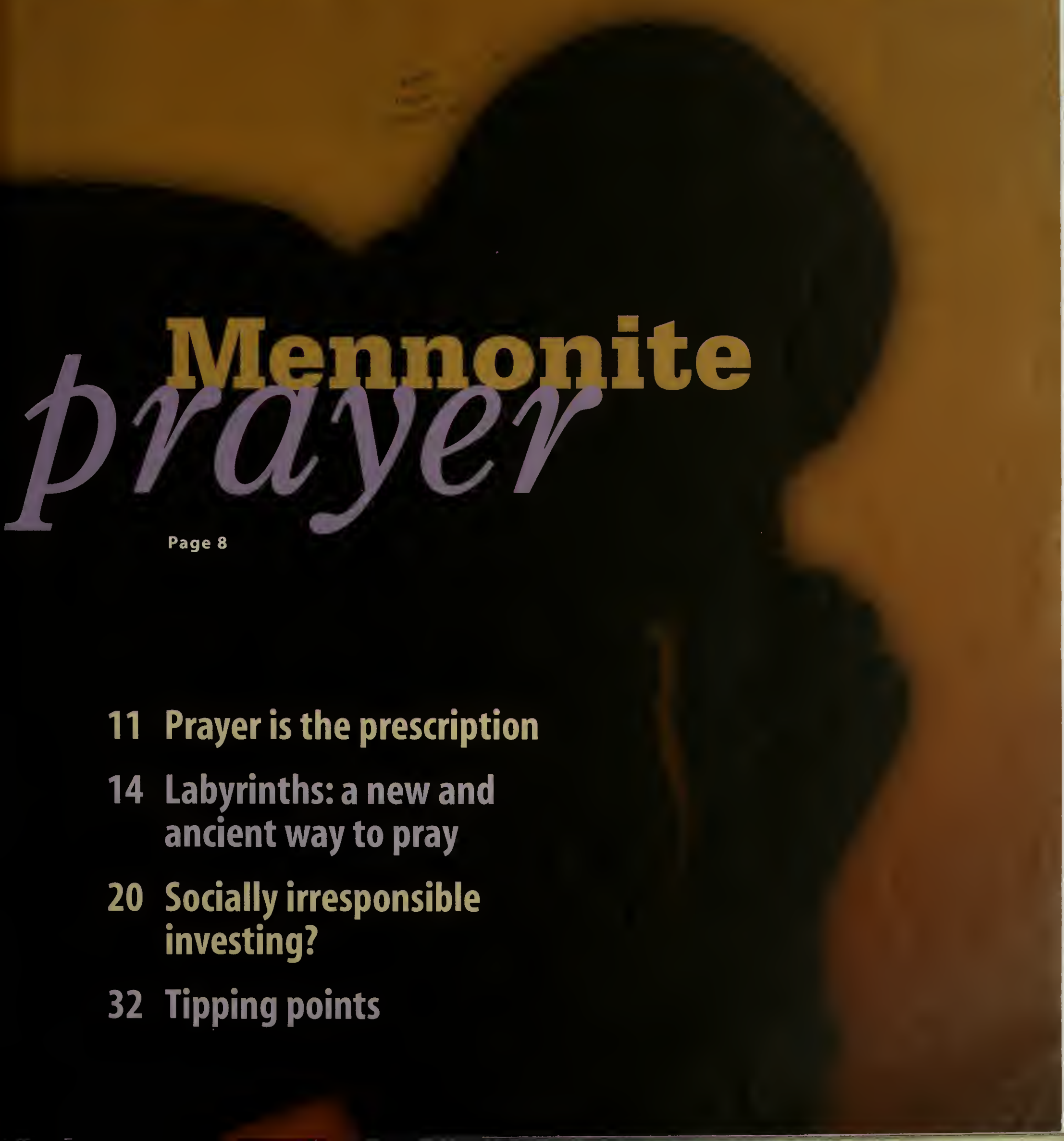

Mennonite *prayer*

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Teach us to pray

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."
—Luke 11:1, NIV

Donna Mast is co-pastor of Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

How do we foster prayer in our congregations? The question came during a study of the Beatitudes among Allegheny Conference ministers. My conference minister grinned at me. Shortly before this study had begun, I asked what he'd intended when he suggested I lead a seminar on prayer in the congregation during our upcoming summer conference meetings.

His said too often our prayer meetings become Bible studies and our phone prayer chains become communication lines or even occasions for gossip. We don't know how to be effective pray-ers in our congregations. I said I would lead the seminar.

Now that I've said yes, what am I to do? I am a learner myself. I suppose I will lead out of what I have learned and invite other learners to add to the discussion. What follows is a bit of what I've learned.

Many of us want to connect more deeply with God in prayer and long for ways to make prayer more meaningful in our congregations. I believe God also wants to connect with us individually and congregationally. So why is it so difficult? I can think of several reasons.

Some of us are afraid of intimacy. It is risky to open ourselves to others. Will they see something there they don't like or don't approve of? What if I appear silly or vain or selfish? What if others turn away from me because of what they discover in these intimate moments? It is no wonder intimacy scares us. Prayer is an intimate endeavor. The act of praying brings us into intimacy with God. Perhaps we fear God's rejection, but God will not turn away from us. God already knows all about us and loves us. What is more likely to happen is that as we open ourselves to God, we see ourselves more clearly. Rather than shy away from this self-understanding we can open ourselves up to God's ability to transform us.

We come to prayer with expectations. We may have had previous experiences with God that we want to recreate. When our next prayer experiences fail to meet our expectations, we may stop trying. Or perhaps we want the same experiences of prayer others have had. When our expectations are not met, we become discouraged and give up. We need to put our expectations aside as we come to God in prayer.

Our lives are cluttered with noise and hectic schedules. Too much noise and activity interfere with an effective prayer life. Most of us require discipline in our lives to ensure that prayer happens. We must carve out some space and time in our day that belongs solely to the practice of prayer. As we try to reduce the noise that we can control and devote time to God in prayer, we discover that prayer comes more naturally to us at other times in the day as well.

This is also true for congregations. If praying together as a congregation is a goal, then we must carve out time and space for prayer to happen. We must not allow other agenda to fill the time we've allotted for prayer. Our prayer-chain people may need reminders now and then that the purpose of the chain is to pass along the information people need to be informed pray-ers—not more than is needed and not speculation.

Lois Barrett was our teacher for the study I mentioned earlier. In a discussion about congregations practicing dependency on God, she said that missional congregations are those that practice dependency on God. They are congregations that pray a lot. They pray not because it is a duty but because they know God will show up and because when God shows up it makes a difference. TM

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Rural issues span the border

Now that it appears Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada will hold a joint assembly in Charlotte, N.C., in 2005 ("Goin' to Carolina in My Mind," April 20), I would like to make some suggestions for the assembly.

Plan cross-border workshops and seminars for the North American regions arbitrarily divided by the 49th parallel. As a pastor who has served churches in the Great Plains of both the United States and Canada, I have long observed that Mennonites in rural communities on both sides of the border have more in common with each other—despite perceived rivalries—than with fellow Mennonites in our respective countries on both coasts. A shared ecology implies shared economic challenges and interests. If we want to contextualize the gospel appropriately, then we need not only national contextualization but also economic and ecological contextualization.

Such seminars and workshops could focus on the challenges rural communities face on both sides of the 49th parallel. Corporate, technical and political forces threaten rural communities in both Canada and the United States. We need understanding across the 49th parallel so that we can get on with the primary missional task in the rural church: re-creation of sustainable local rural communities.—*S. Roy Kaufman, moderator, Central Plains Mennonite Conference*

MCC has program, too

As an adoptive mother of two children born in Latin America, I would like to thank Anton Flores for his thoughtful article on the need for Christians to promote ethical international adoptions and to become involved in efforts that promote social and economic justice in these countries ("Just Adoptions," May 4). Flores shared that his family sponsors a child through World Vision from Guatemala, the country from which they adopted their son. I would just like to add that Mennonite Central Committee also offers child education sponsorship through the Global Family program. Global Family funds provide support for individuals, families and communities to improve educational opportunities for children. Sponsorship information is available at www.mcc.org/global family.—*Karen Metzler, Chillicothe, Ohio*

Young adults need balance

Thanks to Sarah Thompson for her courageous and thoughtful Speaking Out ("Mennonite to the Point of Vomiting?" May 4). During my four years at a Mennonite college I was often reminded of the importance of sustainability for Mennonite young adults. I saw the brightest and most-driven of my fellow students dealing with mental illness, depression, disorders and other forms of burnout and breakdown. We grow up learning about all the problems in the world and wanting to make a difference, but often no one tells us about the importance of balance and saying no to overcommitment. Sarah did a great job of beginning a conversation about the risks of this approach.

As Mennonites look toward our next generation of leaders, we need to look at this issue in depth. Sarah's article is the first published work I've seen on this, and I hope there is more discussion to come. I know this isn't a uniquely Mennonite problem, but as a church that calls young people to a life of service and mission, we also need to remind ourselves of the importance of self-care, guilt-free recreation and sustainability.—*Tim Nafziger, London, England*

Title not professional

On the cover of the May 4 issue of *The Mennonite* we noticed an article titled, "Mennonite to the Point of Vomiting?" (Speaking Out). Just looking at the title was disgusting. Reading the article made me think that this article should have been printed in a medical journal. As a journalist, your choice of words for the title could have been more professional.—*Gordon Beidler, Barto, Pa.*

Law enforcement in God's kingdom

In his Readers Say letter to the editor ("Mennonite Policeman Is Pacifist," April 20) Gregg Rosenbery, a police officer, wrote that "lethal force is, and always will be, the last and final option in law enforcement." But as Christians we are to be witnesses in our own lives of how God is at work in this world.

When God sent Jesus to proclaim God's kingdom, he too was acting as a peace officer. His life and parables showed us what the shalom of God looks like. It is forgiving and patient. Yet when this world rejected God's kingdom, they nailed Jesus to a cross and killed him. Lethal force is, and always

IN THIS ISSUE

New in this issue is a center spread (pages 16-17) focusing on the life of one congregation. The congregation we chose is the newly formed Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church, and Daniel Hertzler (page 20) provides a history of Mennonite activity in and around Scottdale. We hope to run a similar photo spread on one Mennonite Church USA congregation each quarter. Central to all congregational experience, however, is prayer. This issue examines "gelassenheit" as one characteristic of a prayer-filled life (page 8), the power of prayer to heal people (page 11) and labyrinths (page 14).—*Editors* will be, the last and final option in "human" law enforcement. However, in the death and resurrection of Jesus we see what God's first and last option is for the law enforcement of God's kingdom: the suffering servanthood of Jesus of Nazareth.

If this is how God deals with evil and crime, why do we have so many Christians going along with the world's way of enforcing law where, in the end, taking another's life is permitted and trained for? There is no greater love than when we are willing to lay down our lives for our neighbors. So in what way are we showing love when we are trained and willing to take the life of someone in the extreme case?—*Marco Funk, Rosthern, Sask.*

Accept violence against ourselves first
We tend to forget that we are called to be separate from the world's lifestyle. Therefore, Anabaptist nonresistance in today's church is unclear to many because of our representative form of government. We live in two kingdoms, but our supreme loyalty can be to only one. We are not all led to the same degree of participation in national government, but we are all called to give supreme loyalty to Christ. We do not protect or advance ourselves by physical force, choosing to accept violence to ourselves rather than inflict violence on others. This must be manifested in our social and political lives.—*R.J. Hower, Goshen, Ind.*

Food and power
Karl McKinney's article relating the pursuit of food with the pursuit of power through politics was a timely article ("The Work of God Is to Believe," Grace and Truth). It was encouraging to have someone help clarify my thoughts and ideas on this matter.—*Eli Smucker, Narvon, Pa.*

Healed by Jesus' wounds
It is interesting to me to note the different Readers Say responses to the movie *The Passion of the Christ*. If you haven't seen the movie, it seems strange to me that you can pass judgment on it (April 20). When I saw it I was moved.

I too felt the beatings went on too long until I read again, "Just as there were many who were appalled at him—his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness" (Isaiah 52:14, NIV). The Romans were cruel—as attested by the use of the cross for crucifixions.

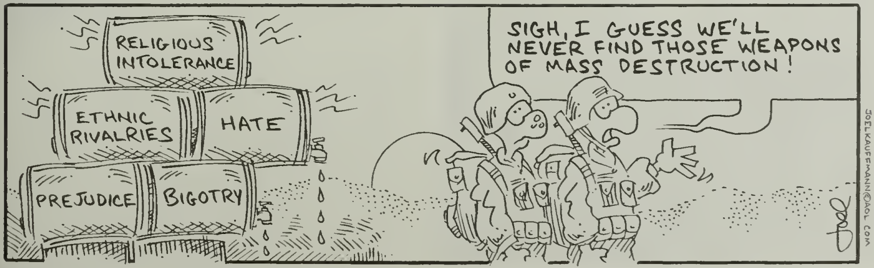
Mel Gibson brought out the part of the gospel we neglect: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24, NIV). Thanks, Mel Gibson.—*Jim Mullet, Guernsey, Sask.*

People who advocate peace can be violent
I agree with Mark Amstutz (Readers Say, Feb. 3) that every issue of *The Mennonite* should feature an article that affirms pacifism as central to Christianity. This should include frequent articles condemning legalized abortion, which Mother Teresa claimed is the greatest threat to peace in the world. It should also include articles about all the types of violence condemned in the Mennonite Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, including violence against women and children. It would be interesting to read an article about domestic violence in the Mennonite church, since it is entirely possible for people who advocate peace and justice to, nevertheless, resort to violence in their personal lives.—*Jerry Stanaway, Lombard, Ill.*

Details matter
Little details that do not matter to most of us are important to historians and to those who live them. In "Leaders Offer Apology to MPH Retirees" (March 2), David E. Hostetler is identified as having been news editor of *Gospel Herald* and *Christian Living*. *Christian Living* had no news editor. Hostetler's record is as follows: editor of *Purpose*, 1971-1984; news editor for *Gospel Herald*, 1971-1983; editor of *Christian Living*, 1984-1990.—*Daniel Hertzler, Scottdale, Pa.*

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**



IN BRIEF

Church closes its doors at age 105

Due to declining attendance, Central Heights Mennonite Church of rural Durham, Kan., held its final service May 30. The church began in 1899, with 30 charter members, as Friedenstal Mennonite Church. It joined the General Conference Mennonite Church that same year.—*Junia Schmidt*

Christian crisis in the Holy Land

Fifty leaders of evangelical and mainline Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox churches and church-related organizations in the United States delivered a letter May 10 to President Bush, asking for a full understanding of "the crisis in the Holy Land confronting Christian Palestinians, Christian institutions and those who wish to visit the birthplace of Christianity." Stating that the "churches have directed their concerns to the Israeli government but to little avail," the church leaders appealed for the President's intervention to help restore the normal functioning of Christian institutions in Israel and the Occupied Territories and claimed that "relations of the churches and these institutions with the Israeli government may be the worst they have ever been."—*National Council of Churches*

CPT workers return to Iraq, give interviews

BAGHDAD—Having returned to Iraq on May 3, CPT workers Le Anne Clausen and Stewart Vriesinga found themselves being interviewed by news organizations. CPT released a report in January with 72 testimonies of abuse and torture of Iraqi detainees, four months before the photos of abused prisoners were made public.

A Canadian TV journalist interviewed them and said, "We should have asked you about your detainee work four months ago." NBC, Swiss TV and a Washington affiliate of CBS also contacted the workers.

In an article in the May 17 issue of *The New Yorker*, writer Seymour Hersh quotes CPT worker Cliff Kindy about the use of dogs by U.S. military to intimidate and even attack Iraqi detainees.

In London, CPT has launched CPT UK, a regional group of the North American-based organization, and invites Christians to participate in its peacemaking work.—*CPT*

MCC photo by Dave Klassen

Seeds and hoes help a Ugandan family survive

Aero Margaret, who lives in a camp for displaced people in northern Uganda, is grateful for seeds and hoes that will allow her to sustain her family. She has land nearby but has remained in the camp because it is safer and because she had no food at home.

Missionary Anna Byler dies at age 90

Byler

GOSHEN, Ind.—Anna M. Byler, 90, a member of East Goshen Mennonite Church, died May 8 at Greencroft Healthcare. She married B. Frank Byler in 1941; he died July 29, 1999. She and her husband were missionaries with the Mennonite Board of Missions and served in Argentina from 1947 to 1962 and 1975 to 1982 and in Uruguay from 1962 to 1975. They were involved in church planting and the Bible institute in Bragado, and Frank taught at the Seminary in Montevideo.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Missionary Albert Buckwalter dies at age 82

Buckwalter

ELKHART, Ind.—Albert S. Buckwalter, whose life passion was the translation of the Bible into indigenous languages, died in his Goshen, Ind., home May 12. He was 82.

Buckwalter, with his wife, Lois (Litwiller), who survives, served the indigenous people of the Argentine Chaco from 1950 to 1993 with Mennonite Board of Missions, a predecessor agency of Mennonite Mission Network. Buckwalter, with indigenous associates, translated the New Testament and Old Testament portions into three Guaycurú languages (Toba, Pilagá and Mocoví). He also compiled dictionaries in these languages. A few weeks before his death, Buckwalter completed the Spanish-Guaycurú Quadrilingual Dictionary.

Buckwalter was a member of College Mennonite Church, Goshen, which held his memorial service on May 15.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Students raise money for African children

GOSHEN, Ind.—During the last several months of classes this spring, Goshen College students spent money on more than just textbooks and pizza. Student-initiated fund-raisers raised nearly $2,500 to pay for measles vaccinations for African children, send food to Ethiopia and buy necessities for victims of AIDS.

Two members of the International Student Club, Hideat Tewolde, a senior from Germany, and Miriam Mohamed, a freshman from Columbus, Ohio, organized several events to raise money for

CPT group conducts public witness in Washington

On May 14, the Washington regional training group of Christian Peacemaker Teams conducts a public witness in front of the Supreme Court protesting the treatment of civilians detained by American forces in Iraq. At the Russell Senate Office Building, the group presented a report from CPT's Iraq team about treatment of Iraqi detainees.

the Red Cross Measles Initiative, which oversees measles vaccinations in Africa, where nearly half a million children die from the virus each year. It costs only $1 to vaccinate a child, and Tewolde remembers thinking "even students can give that."

In another fund-raiser, 150 students gave up five campus cafeteria dinners to raise $1,500 for the Ethiopia Emergency Fund, run by Catholic Relief Services.—*Goshen College News Service*

Friesen receives Bethel's Chair in religion

Friesen

NORTH NEWTON, KAN.—Bethel College Bible and religion professor Duane K. Friesen is the first recipient of the Edmund G. Kaufman Distinguished Chair in Religion. John Sheriff, vice president for academic affairs, announced the inauguration of the Chair and presented Friesen with a commemorative chair at the college's faculty meeting May 11.

Endowed by gifts from the late Bethel College president, the Distinguished Chair will be used to fund the salary of a professor in the Bible and religion department. The Kaufman gift completes the funding for the sixth endowed chair or department at Bethel College. Friesen has taught at Bethel since 1970.—*Bethel College News Service*

Hesston softball team seventh in nation

HESSTON, Kan.—Hesston College's softball team placed seventh at the National Junior College Athletic Association Division III National Championships, held May 20-22 in Joliet, Ill.

At the District G playoffs May 14 in Columbus, Ohio, Hesston defeated Columbus State Community College 3-2 in 10 innings and 8-0 to qualify for nationals for the second straight year.

At the national tournament on May 20, Hesston lost 1-0 to Corning (N.Y.) Community College and 8-6 to Dawson (Mont.) Community College. In the seventh-place game on May 21, they beat Suffolk County (N.Y.) College 10-1.

Hesston finished its season with a 22-13 record.

Goshen College students forced out of Cuba

GOSHEN, Ind.—The Goshen College Study Service Trimester (SST) office received notice in late May that the Cuban government would not renew student visas, which were to expire toward the end of May. The reason for nonrenewal appeared to be related to political rhetoric between U.S. and Cuban governments. Unit leaders Keith and Ann Graber Miller met unsuccessfully with Cuban officials to see if anything could be done to maintain the unit.

The Cuban SST unit relocated to Costa Rica on May 27 for their service assignments. This was discussed with parents when it became evident there was a potential problem in renewing student visas.—*Goshen College*

Mennonite Mission Network photo by Dale Nafziger

What a Wonder-ful world

Employees at Wonder Products of Nepal extract juice from oranges and tangerines. Mennonite Mission Network worker Dale Nafziger, who has worked in Nepal for about 18 years, is the product development engineer for the company, which employs national workers to manufacture products that are 100 percent Nepali, from growing the fruit to the bottling, labeling and advertising.

IN BRIEF

Wendling

Mennonite writer wins fellowship

Linda Wendling, a member of St. Louis Mennonite Fellowship, has been awarded the Milton Center's 2004-2005 postgraduate fellowship in writing. The Milton Center, based on the campus of Seattle Pacific University, exists to nurture writers of Christian commitment and literary excellence. Wendling's story "Inappropriate Babies," which she will expand into a novel during her year at the Milton Center, was published in *New Stories from the South: The Year's Best* (Algonquin Press).

Church leaders call Bush's clean-air policy too weak

One hundred Christian leaders told President Bush in a pointed Earth Day rebuke that they have "grave moral concern" about his clean-air policy. Coordinated by the National Council of Churches, the letter accused Bush of weakening air-quality standards and putting the elderly and young children at particular risk through his "Clear Skies" initiative. *—The Christian Century*

Mennonite *prayer*

An attitude or technique?

by Miriam Frey

In my experience as a spiritual director, I hear people talking about their struggle with personal devotions and private prayer. I have read articles and books by Mennonites that suggest we need more structure in prayer. However, I prefer to pray without structure or words—approaching and being approached by God in silence. This leads me to ask why we are looking for techniques and structures when our tradition abandoned them 500 years ago.

Early Anabaptist leaders must have known about liturgies and prayer books, including morning and evening prayers. Yet they chose to relate to God more informally. Instead of using prayer books, they eventually made their daily life their prayer. When they gathered in community, they offered prayers for and on behalf of the community. Unfortunately, this did not teach individuals how to pray or clarify what constitutes a relationship to God.

When I am in the presence of my Old Order Mennonite relatives, I am struck by an attitude that permeates their lifestyle, their worship and their prayers.

When I am in the presence of my Old Order Mennonite relatives, I am struck by an attitude that permeates their lifestyle, their worship and their prayers. This attitude of "gelassenheit" (a German mystical term for letting loose of oneself) indicates "a way of total dependence, humility and trust before God" (*Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*). When I was a young child, the lives of my parents and extended family demonstrated gelassenheit to me. But as I have become more independent of my family and the church, relying on God has become more difficult.

Why are prayer and reliance on God so onerous? I find

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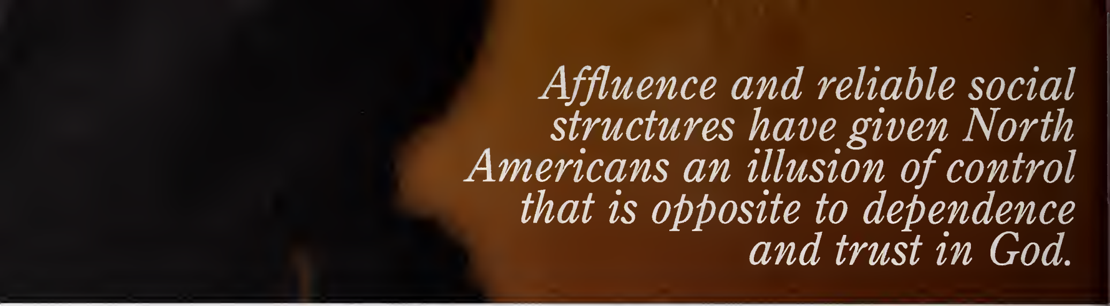

Affluence and reliable social structures have given North Americans an illusion of control that is opposite to dependence and trust in God.

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them hard because I am busy, I want to be in control, and I question whether God really hears our prayers.

1. In our busy lives, it is difficult to find time for communal worship and, even more so, private worship. How do we expect to cultivate a relationship with God and follow Christ when we are too busy? In John 15:4, Jesus invites us to consider living more simply: "Abide in me as I abide in you." This means making choices that draw us closer to God.

2. Trusting God and praying are difficult because we want to be in control—vulnerability is understood as weakness. According to North American culture it is up to us to work hard, make wise investments and be as efficient as possible. I remember learning lessons on patience and vulnerability when I worked in Africa with Mennonite Central Committee. I could work as hard as I wanted, but in the end my planning relied on the timing of flights, the condition of roads and the availability of electricity and fuel. Affluence and reliable social structures have given North Americans an illusion of control that is opposite to dependence and trust in God.

3. Trusting God is not easy when we question whether our prayers really make a difference. Despite our prayers for peace, people around the world still suffer from war while others live in luxury. How do we come to believe that God really cares about our existence or listens to our prayers? This requires faith: "The assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Faith requires trusting in a power beyond our knowledge or imagination.

In a culture that dismisses faith, a simple lifestyle and vulnerability it is difficult to find the time for prayer and to truly rely on the providence of God.

What can we learn about private prayer and worship from our Mennonite tradition that offers few techniques for prayer?

1. Approach prayer with an attitude of gelassenheit. Depending on God is not as easy as it sounds. It requires humility—the proper valuing and loving of oneself—and trusting in something beyond human effort. It means letting go of the need to control events and people—a vulnerability before God.

2. Examine our concept of prayer. Does prayer engage our mind, body, heart and soul? Do we expect God to change the weather for our family picnic? Do we expect God to keep us from suffering? Do we expect God to speak to us? Do we expect our efforts to lead us to God? Do we expect prayer to make a difference? How we answer these questions will determine how we pray.

3. Live with integrity—ensuring all of life is honest and healthy. For centuries Mennonites have made their lifestyle their prayer. This requires the daily prayer: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24).

4. Attend to our relationship with God. What brings our attention to God? For some people it is tending the garden, and for others it is reading Scripture or morning and evening prayers. For some people God is encountered in Sunday morning worship, while for others God is experienced in nature, creativity or silence.

There are many ways the Mennonite tradition has shown rather than taught individuals how to pray. Because we lack a method, Mennonites today feel ill-equipped to pray, either publicly or privately. However, if we believe God approaches us with love and mercy, then we can ask God for help. As with any relationship, if we are committed to regular communication, eventually we become comfortable in our conversation. If we approach God with humility, trust, integrity and our full attention, we can expect God to abide in us.

The Anabaptists trusted the words of Jesus recorded in John 15:5: "I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." As Christians, we can experience the love and presence of God in our lives. Prayer becomes an extension of that experience. How we pray may not be as important as the commitment and attitudes we bring before God.

Miriam Frey is a teacher and spiritual director living in Waterloo, Ont. A recent D.Min graduate from Regis College in Toronto, she teaches spirituality courses and leads spiritual retreats for groups and congregations. A version of this article appeared in Canadian Mennonite.

Prayer is the prescription

Studies show the healing power of prayer.

by Phyllis Edgerly Ring

As spiritual care coordinator at New Hampshire's Portsmouth Hospital, Mary James sees prayer's effects on healing every day. But she witnessed them in a personal way when she and her husband—parents of children 12, 17 and 22—were both diagnosed with cancer.

"We had each been healthy and were quite shocked," says Mary. "Diagnosed with cancer of the throat, my husband had never smoked and had none of the risk factors for this disease. We asked everyone we knew to pray for him, including our community of faith. Whenever he was scheduled for a procedure or treatment, we'd gather friends together and pray."

He not only did well in recovery but was also spared many of the side effects that usually accompany the aggressive treatment he had, she says. "Knowing that people were supporting him through prayer brought him a deep peace and composure. Even in some of the worst moments, he never became depressed or despondent."

Knowing that people were supporting him through prayer brought him a deep peace and composure. Even in some of the worst moments, he never became depressed or despondent.—Mary James

Then three years ago, Mary was diagnosed with breast cancer and again, "we mobilized the prayer warriors," she says with a smile. "It was important to me to pray with people at pivotal moments. We prayed throughout my treatment, and when I was going in for surgery we were filling out the living-will forms and needed a witness, and the nurse found

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a man who turned out to be a minister. He and his wife came and prayed with us, and it was wonderful."

Mary's surgeon and others in the operating room later told her they'd felt an atmosphere of peace and comfort all throughout her time in surgery.

"I just know that all through that time, I felt very, very cared for," she says.

The science of prayer: Recent studies have demonstrated not only the power of prayer in healing but the infinite nature of the healing process.

Larry Dossey, M.D., former chief of staff of Medical City Dallas Hospital and co-chairman of the Panel on Mind/Body Interventions at the National Institutes of Health, is the world's foremost champion of prayer's healing effect. Speaking from his New Mexico home, Dossey describes his goal to "anchor the holistic health movement in a model that is scientifically respectable and which, at the same time, answers to our inner spiritual needs."

"As typical and orthodox a physician as you could find, it was the practice of medicine that was my doorway to the infinite," he says. "I was deeply affected by unexplained 'miracle cures' I witnessed. One of the most powerful involved a patient with lung cancer who refused treatment and returned a year later with a normal chest X-ray after his church congregation had prayed for him."

"Such miracles suggest that no matter how serious an illness may be, healing is always possible, and such healing can happen for anyone, saint or sinner," he says. "They remind us that there will always be phenomena we cannot explain."

Recent studies have demonstrated not only the power of prayer in healing but the infinite nature of the healing process.

Dossey's many books about prayer and healing have been described as must-reads for anyone who prays, and "even those who think they don't." The list includes *Space, Time & Medicine*, the best-seller *Healing Words*, *Prayer Is Good Medicine* and *Be Careful What You Pray For … You Just Might Get It.* His most recent, *Reinventing Medicine*, explores the role of "nonlocal" or infinite mind in health and medicine.

He began his 1989 book, *Recovering the Soul: A Scientific and Spiritual Approach*, with the story of Sarah, a patient who experienced cardiac arrest just as her gall-bladder surgery concluded. Although under general anesthesia when this occurred, she later provided an eyewitness account of many details associated with the operating room during

the time of her arrest and of adjacent areas down the hall. What made this particularly remarkable was that Sarah had been blind since birth.

"We cannot make sense of our lives unless we acknowledge that our mind operates nonlocally," says Dossey. "Studies in prayer reveal that we possess a quality capable of reaching out infinitely in space and time. Prayer studies therefore point like an arrow to the existence of a soul-like quality in everyone."

In Dossey's opinion, the best scientific studies have examined the positive effects of prayer on heart disease, advanced AIDS and infertility. "If prayer can affect serious diseases such as advanced AIDS, no disease is beyond responding to prayer," he says.

One of the best-known studies was conducted by Randolph Byrd in the cardiac-care unit of San Francisco General Hospital. All 400 or so subjects were given routine standard care, but half the group was also prayed for by prayer groups. The group that had been prayed for showed no cardiac arrests, no need for an artificial ventilator and no deaths during their hospitalization. However, 12 members of the group that did not receive prayers faced such complications and suffered three deaths. None of the medical staff knew who was prayed for.

"If this had been a new drug or surgical procedure being tested, it would have been hailed as a great therapeutic breakthrough," Dossey says.

Such studies ought to help religion and science

come closer together, he says. "At some level, they should be different, because they address different domains. But the science behind prayer and healing shows there's huge room for accommodation on both sides. Love and compassion are central to scientific studies on prayer," says Dossey, "and these have always been valued by the world's great religions."

The spirit of healing: "Although studies show that prayer is associated with healing, the precise mechanism that makes this true isn't yet known," Dossey says. "Many scholars are offering hypotheses that suggest that we are going to have to think about consciousness in a new way—as a process that extends beyond the brain and body and that is independent of space and time."

"When folks ask, How does prayer work? we … must first say in the face of the vast mysteries of God that we don't actually know," says Mary. "It can perhaps be said that prayer always works, if we trust in God. 'Ask, and you shall receive,' says the Gospel. 'Knock, and the door will be opened to you.' "

"When I pray with folks here at the hospital, I notice an almost immediate physiological response," Mary says. "They seem to relax, close their eyes, and come back to themselves. I bet if we had a blood-pressure cuff hanging around, we'd be able to actually measure this effect, which Herbert Benson described in his *The Relaxation Response*.

"Often people will shed some tears during prayer, and I think that release of emotion is always a healing thing. Also, almost as a reflex, they'll often also reach out to make physical contact with me."

Afterward people express gratitude and a sense of being comforted and may often find it easier to talk in more depth, she says. "I think that peace they feel is about a sense of being connected with something greater than themselves, that has their best outcomes in mind. The relaxation, the release of emotion and a sense of connection all seem to be a consistent part of the process of prayer in healing—almost a surrender, I guess."

One of Mary's most memorable experiences came when she prayed with an older patient one day who seemed "weak and within weeks of dying. When I asked if she wanted to pray, it was as if a bolt of lightning went through her, and this nearly immobile woman grabbed both my hands. I spoke some words of prayer, and when I was done she indicated through her touch that we weren't done yet—and then she prayed for me. We were both crying afterward."

Surprisingly, Dossey says, studies show that prayer's effectiveness in healing is not dependent on the sick person having religious or spiritual faith.

"We know this because the major studies were double-blind, and recipients didn't know they were prayed for, plus many studies in healing prayer have been done on animals, plants and microbes. Presumably they don't know it is happening," he says.

However, faith makes a difference in the personal experience of the individual who is ill, Mary says. "Those with faith often make meaning out of things, put them in a context that is larger than themselves, and I think that in itself is profoundly healing."

The breath of God we feel through prayer is just everywhere all the time, but it becomes more palpable with every breath of our own in times of illness.

"We need to remember," notes Dossey, "that prayer ultimately is not about getting something but about connecting with the Absolute. If we can do so, prayer won't disappoint."

Mary agrees. "I think what illness really does is invite us to open up to the possibilities that we don't yet know, the ones that help bring us closer to God. Prayer is the agent in that process. The breath of God we feel through prayer is just everywhere all the time, but it becomes more palpable with every breath of our own in times of illness."

Phyllis Edgerly Ring lives in Exeter, N.H.

labyrinths

A new and ancient way to pray

by Melanie Zuercher

does everyone pray the same way? How can I better focus my attention on God when I pray? How can I quiet myself and listen for God when my life is so hectic?

In the past 10-15 years, questions like these have led Christians, including some Mennonites, to look for new disciplines that help them center on God and enhance their prayer life. One of these "new" methods is in fact ancient—the labyrinth or, as some call it, "prayer walk."

The labyrinth of Greek mythology was a maze, intended to confuse—as reflected in its current dictionary definition—but labyrinths in many other ancient cultures, as well as those that appeared in European churches in the Middle Ages, are not mazes. There is only one way in and out, and the "walls" are never more than a few inches high.

Marlene Kropf, who teaches Christian spirituality and serves as a spiritual director at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., is probably responsible for introducing more Mennonites to labyrinths than any one person. In 1998, when she was a staff person for the Mennonite Church's Board of Congregational Ministries, Marlene included the labyrinth as a prayer discipline in that year's Lenten material for congregations.

"Since medieval times, the labyrinth has been a spiritual tool for Christians," she wrote. "The journey into the center of the labyrinth signifies 'letting go'; the return journey signifies openness to the new life God has given."

Labyrinths are "an active way to pray," Marlene says. She has found that seminary students who sit in chairs all day are especially responsive to a way of praying that allows them to use a different part of their brains than the one used in the classroom.

A long-time, regular walker, Marlene says, "I discovered that I prayed more easily when I walked. Going around in a circle [in a labyrinth] is quieting and centering."

Kropf's first exposure to a labyrinth came at a retreat center owned and run by Beulah Steiner, an AMBS board member who lives near Wooster, Ohio. Steiner later came to Elkhart and spent a day mowing a labyrinth into the grass south of the seminary's main building.

At least two Mennonite retreat centers and one church also have labyrinths mowed in the grass. Mary Lou Weaver Houser owns Herrbrook Retreat Cottage near New Danville, Pa. She got the idea for her labyrinth from one she saw at The Hermitage, near Three Rivers, Mich.

She opened the labyrinth to the public in April 2002 and has been "amazed at how it never ceases to move people. The most common comment I hear is that praying outdoors in that setting slows people down and makes them notice and connect with nature.

"I've used it in all kinds of weather, including snow and rain," she says. "The different seasons bring out different aspects of [the walk]. In the summer, I mow it with a push mower that belonged to [my husband's] grandpa. I do it as a prayer, remembering the people who will walk the labyrinth."

Gwen Groff, pastor of Bethany Mennonite Church in Bridgewater Corners, Vt., also uses her church's "lawn labyrinth" as a personal prayer discipline, including the time she spends mowing. She has used it as part of a Communion service, too.

"People take the elements at the entrance and then walk to the center, and back out," she says. "There are grapes and goldfish crackers for the kids in the center, and they can run through it if they want to."

Not all labyrinths are permanent. Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., and Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church in Wichita, Kan., have labyrinths painted on cloth or canvas that can fit in

Web resources on labyrinths

www.gracecathedral.org/labyrinth (the Web site for resources from Lauren Artress, canon of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, who is probably the one person responsible for re-introducing labyrinths to Western Christians as a prayer tool)
www.grouppublishing.com (do a search for "labyrinth" to find out more about the Prayer Walk, a kit for building and using a portable labyrinth)
www.stkate.edu/wisdomways (click on "Labyrinth")
www.jillkhg.com/deephavenlabphotos.html (beautiful photos of outdoor labyrinths made of all different kinds of materials)
www.jillkhg.com/labyrinthpraying.html (part of the Web site of Jill Geoffrion, who has produced numerous resources for praying with labyrinths)

The journey into the center of the labyrinth signifies "letting go"; the return journey signifies openness to the new life God has given.—Marlene Kropf

A spiritual tool for Christians: A labyrinth on the campus of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.

a fellowship hall or large room. Both congregations have used their labyrinths during Lent.

Michele Hershberger, chair of the Bible department at Hesston (Kan.) College as well as director of youth ministries there, discovered labyrinths at a Youth Specialties convention in Nashville, Tenn. There, it was called a "prayer walk" and was set up in one of the convention halls for people to try. "It was just wonderful," Michele says. As a result of her experience, she ordered a kit from Group Publishing that told how to make a labyrinth on a large piece of cloth or a tarp.

"I used it [this past September] in my Faith and Discipleship class," she says. This course on spiritual disciplines had about 30 students and included a weekend retreat with 17 hours of silence. The labyrinth was one option Hershberger gave her students for their prayer time.

"It's different from many—labyrinths often are about you and God, about listening and prayer. This one came with CDs of quiet music and sometimes a voice reading Scripture, so the students would wear headphones and listen as they walked. There were 'stations' within the labyrinth and some guided meditation. At one place there was a bucket of water and some stones, and you were invited to drop a stone into the water as a way of dropping something you need to let go.

"The walk is specifically presented as going inward five stations to meet God, [then] coming outward five stations into the world and your mission or ministry."

Although none of the students was required to take the prayer walk, all did, Michele says. It does not work for everyone, she says, but "God meets people in different ways, and I think this is one."

Joetta Schlabach, who lives in St. Paul, Minn., works with daily access to a labyrinth at Wisdom Ways, a resource center for spirituality that is a collaboration between the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and the College of St. Catherine.

"The labyrinth is in the grass between our building and the college," she says. "There's a parking lot on one side and the chapel of the sisters, with a garden, on the other. It's a symbolic location—our prayer is always moving us between the world and the sacred."

Joetta doesn't walk the labyrinth regularly, she says—"sometimes on my lunch break." What she finds as meaningful as walking is reading the entries that people write in the journal left at the labyrinth's entrance. "Some people come consciously or deliberately seeking an answer [from God]," she says. "Some bring their children, who sometimes draw pictures.

"One 9-year-old wrote, 'I was afraid I'd get lost and have to start over, but when I got to the center, I knew I could trust myself.' I think that's a paradigm of Christian life.

"Jeremiah 6:16 says, 'Stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way lies; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.' I think that's emblematic of the labyrinth. In the walking, we do find rest." TM

Melanie Zuercher is a free-lance writer and a member of Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

The ancient path

What do Christmas, Easter, contemporary Christian music and labyrinths have in common? All have their origins in pre-Christian or secular tradition or practice. And all are used by Christians to worship God and celebrate life in Christ.

"We might as well be up front about it—labyrinths [originated as] a pre-Christian prayer practice," says Marlene Kropf. "But they [also] have a Christian history. The church has always borrowed from the surrounding culture and inculcated it with Christian meaning."

Labyrinths began appearing in churches in Europe—most famously in France's Chartres Cathedral—during the Middle Ages. "They were connected with pilgrimage," Marlene says. "Not everyone could make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land—it was too dangerous or too expensive. So labyrinths became the substitute that could bring the same kind of peace and wholeness to the soul.

"The Psalms are full of language about 'walking the path,'" she says.

"God has always been present in the world," says Joetta Schlabach, who as part of her work helps people learn to use a labyrinth. "God was present before Christianity. God works through the church and beyond the church.

"I think of Paul, in Athens, saying, 'Here's the statue to the unknown God. I can tell you who that is.' We can take things that aren't Christian, but we can imbue them with Christian meaning and they can speak of God to us."

Joetta recalls hearing a Catholic sister, a faculty member at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minn., talk about "how we make God too small—we tend to have a fixed idea of who God is and what God can do. Often, when I start walking the labyrinth, a song will emerge [in my mind]. It's almost always a hymn or a chorus. I like to think that God has brought it to mind and that it's intended to be part of my prayer that day."—*Melanie Zuercher*

mennonite churches usa

Scottdale Mennonite Church, Scottdale, Pa.

June 1 marks the one year anniversary of the merging of Kingview Mennonite Church (KMC) and Mennonite Church of Scottdale (MCS). Both congregations were experiencing dwindling attendance due in part to Mennonite Publishing House cuts and retirees moving away.

The merger was spurred both by a letter from the youth group (which had been meeting jointly for many years) encouraging the congregations to look at merger seriously and by the looming prospect of a pastoral search by the MCS congregation.

After a year of trying out both facilities on a quarterly rotation comes the difficult task of deciding which building to permanently call home.

Above: Both former congregations hosted food distribution programs for the community. Here, Brenda Johnson (left) and Leah Beth Shetler (second from left) help out with Fresh Express.

Near right: MCS and KMC have jointly hosted a community vacation Bible school each summer. Peter Dyck (standing) presents his then & now activity to Arlene Miller's "city" group.

Middle right: Yvonne Stull and Krista Rittenhouse sign the covenant form during the inaugural worship service on June 1, 2003.

Far right: Youth programs from the two congregations have been meeting jointly for many years. The MYF is shown putting on a skit they created during their annual dessert theater fund-raiser.

Large photo: Members of both congregations join hands across the symbolic dividing center aisle as John Stahl-Wert, congregational overseer of MCS, leads in prayer.

Courtesy photos by Virgil Yoder and Julia Zehr

Above: Conrad and Donna Mast (center), are installed as co-pastors of Scottdale Mennonite Church. Also pictured are Charles Shenk (left), interim pastor at MCS, and Kurt Horst, Allegheny Conference minister. Formerly the Masts were co-pastors at KMC.

JASON
BRET
CROAK
RIBBITS

The two shall become one

The merger of the Mennonite congregations at Scottdale, Pa.

by Daniel Hertzler

On June 1, 2003, Kingview Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church of Scottdale formed a new congregation, Scottdale Mennonite Church. Serious discussions about this had been going on for more than a year. For eight weeks during each of the two previous summers, the congregations had met jointly with one or the other of the meetinghouses closed. In April 2002, representatives from each met with Dale Stoltzfus, Mennonite Church USA denominational minister, to clarify their congregational visions separately and together. These were found to be compatible.

Mennonite Publishing House (MPH) was organized in 1908, with Aaron Loucks as the first general manager, a position he held until 1935.

This merger represented a new development in more than two centuries of Mennonite activity in Fayette and Westmoreland counties. Edward Yoder in *The Mennonites of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania* (1940) has documented this history. Yoder's account described a pattern of expansion and contraction covering 150 years. The first 50 years, 1790-1840, involved expansion. This was followed by 50 years of decline until 1892, when two Loucks brothers were ordained for church leadership, Joseph as a deacon and Aaron as a minister. In the following year a new Mennonite meetinghouse was erected in the town of Scottdale. This ushered in a new period of expansion, which lasted more than 75 years.

Several of Yoder's observations provide perspective on this pattern of oscillation. He writes: "The desire for more and cheaper lands as well as the lure of the frontier took possession of many people of all classes. Even conservative, peace-loving Mennonites got the fever to go west and grow up with the country." Mennonite concern for worship and fellowship came along, and they erected two meetinghouses, one near Pennsville in Fayette County and the other at Stonerville (now Alverton) in Westmoreland County. The people laid out cemeteries adjacent to the meetinghouses.

Yoder reports, however, that "of the families who settled on the south side of Jacobs Creek, it is doubtful if the younger members of some of these became active members of the Mennonite congregations." Several things influenced people in Westmoreland County, including "the constant movement of the population in the country at that time. By the year 1815 the tide of migration into Ohio was underway. Many of the Mennonite settlers or of descendants whose parents had settled here 20 years earlier had joined in the wholesale trek westward in the quest for newer and cheaper lands."

Another baneful influence on the local churches included "leadership [that] was evidently lacking in initiative, and the conservative traditions were continued with too much tenaciousness." Among these traditions was a continuation of the German language in the worship services. As a result many young people joined other, more exciting groups, such as the Churches of God, the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Association. Although these had been of German background, they adapted to English more readily than the Mennonites.

One family prominent among the early Mennonites was named Stoner. A telephone book showed some 85 listings of Stoner. Yet the Scottdale Mennonite directory has only two families named Stoner, both having joined the Mennonite Church in recent years.

After people built a meetinghouse in Scottdale, preaching services continued in the Pennsville and Stonerville buildings. But the center of interest and activity was in Scottdale, where vigorous programs began. Aaron Loucks spent eight months at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago during 1894-95. "After that he returned to his congregation to carry on the duties of a preacher and pastor." Mennonite Publishing House (MPH) was organized in 1908, with Aaron Loucks as the first general manager, a position he held until 1935. Included in the Yoder account is the beginning of Sunday schools in East and North Scottdale, each of them in schoolhouses. In East Scottdale (Kingview) it was first held in 1906 and in North Scottdale (a mile away) in 1934.

MPH began an expansion phase after World War II. The Scottdale Mennonite congregation and its extension Sunday schools also grew. The Kingview Sunday school erected its own building in 1950 and became an organized congregation in 1952. The North Scottdale school building was given to the church, and a congregation organized there also. In the mid-1950s the Scottdale congregation called Willis Hallman as its first salaried pastor. In 1958 Edwin Alderfer became pastor of both the North Scottdale and Kingview congregations.

Yoder observed that "the greater part of the increase in the congregation's membership has come through members and their families who moved to Scottdale from other congregations of the Mennonite faith." This was particularly true because of the close association between the

Scottdale congregation and MPH. More than 40 years from the beginning of Sunday school in East Scottdale the congregation was organized there. Even so, local adults and young people joined these congregations.

My wife, Mary, and I were among those who moved to Scottdale from other areas. We came from Ohio in September 1952 for me to accept an editorial assignment at MPH. We were soon involved in congregational activity and joined Kingview and were members nearly as long as its 51 years as a congregation.

We raised our four sons here and sent them to Mennonite colleges. They saw limited opportunities for employment here, though one came back with his family and worked nine years at MPH. But a failure to develop many multigenerational families seemed to hamper our long-range stability. At one time Jesse and Ruth Sprinkle with their descendants represented four generations at Kingview. Then Jesse and Ruth died.

Some contraction in our church life began around 1968. Termites had invaded the North Scottdale building, and the congregation merged with Kingview (KMC). Ten years later we enlarged the Kingview building. KMC and Mennonite Church of Scottdale (MCS) continued as sister congregations for 35 years. Some may have seen them as daughter-mother, but they had developed separate identities, even though only a mile and a half apart. Many people in the congregations knew each other and worked together; leaders met to review relationships and coordinate programs. People new in the congregations may not have been aware of KMC's Sunday school background.

In the mid-1990s each congregation called a pastoral couple: Douglas and Wanda Roth Amstutz at MCS, Conrad and Donna Mast at KMC. MCS employed their couple at 1.25-time, while KMC's was a full-time position. But trouble waited in the wings. It came first in some movements of longtime congregational supporters who retired and moved to other areas of the country. The trouble was exacerbated by the dismemberment of MPH, a shock to the entire Mennonite community.

When the Amstutzes resigned and moved to Canada, MCS hesitated to look for full-time pastoral leadership. They hired Charles Shenk as interim pastor on a part-time basis. He served notice that he was not available after May 31, 2003. On June 1 the congregations merged. Leaders decided that merger should be done and details about which building to use to be worked out later, since each congregation had a functional building.

With the merger of these two congregations a new phase has begun in the history of Mennonites in our area. What will develop from this remains to be seen. On one hand, it represents a contraction. On the other hand, the merger provides for a pooling of resources. Instead of two struggling congregations we have one with the resources to pay our local expenses and contribute a reasonable amount to outside causes.

Personnel gifts are also shared: Sunday school teachers, administrators, custodians, music leaders. KMC brought pastors Conrad and Donna Mast, who now serve the merged congregation. With our peace tradition, Mennonites represent a minority in our community, which has a strong military tradition. Although we do not stand out in a crowd the way we once did, we represent a view of Christian practice some find offensive.

Yet some are willing to join us in pursuing our vision of peace and justice. The chair of our merged congregation is Kim Turrill, who grew up in a congregation of the Churches of God, one of the denominations that absorbed Mennonites in earlier days. I told her once that it is only fair to get someone back from this group. In the Believers Church tradition it is understood that those in each generation must decide whether to embrace the faith or deny it. This introduces an element of instability in congregational life. Yet we seek to build a community that will nurture our children in the faith and attract others to practice it with us.

Conrad and Donna have the task of shepherding this merged congregation. After six months, Donna said: "It is beautiful to see how God has been working to bring the two congregations together. What once seemed impossible happened quickly and peaceably. Now that God has made us one, I'm enjoying the growing interaction. The lines that once separated us are becoming more and more blurry. I'm excited to see what more God wants to do with us."

There have been hurdles and adjustments. What has been most pleasant is the sound of eager workers stepping into roles within the congregation.—Conrad Mast

Conrad said: "There have been hurdles and adjustments. What has been most pleasant is the sound of eager workers stepping into roles within the congregation.We rarely hear anything that sounds like second guessing the decision to merge our churches. Our energies have been better used in exploring the directions that seem to be hearing God calling us to step into the future."

As we move into our third century, we face a new reality: one congregation and MPH reduced to a shadow of its former self. What was once a noisy, pulsing building is now almost as silent as a mausoleum. But we are reminded of the words of Hebrews 13:14: "Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

Daniel Hertzler is a member of Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Socially irresponsible investing?

Michael Shank is a master's degree student in the Conflict Transformation Program at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

When a financial services firm such as Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA), a company committed to socially responsible investing, makes investment decisions, they rely on a philosophy of stewardship for guidance. The firm's philosophy is guided by a set of core social values that evaluate corporate behavior to determine which companies are appropriate for MMA portfolios. However, MMA's philosophy is not consistent with its practice. Investors peering beyond the facade end up absconding, as I did, in order to invest in more socially responsible firms, like PAX or New Alternatives Fund, that are consistent with their stated social values.

According to the company's Web site, "MMA seeks to invest in companies that (1) respect the dignity and value of all people, (2) build a world at peace and free from violence, (3) demonstrate a concern for justice in a global society, (4) exhibit responsible management practices, (5) support and involve communities and (6) practice environmental stewardship." Although these guidelines articulate MMA's expectations for corporate behavior, it appears that their holdings are not behaving.

Divergence occurs between MMA's theory and practice for two reasons: (1) Studious research of corporate track records seems to be absent, and (2) new employees claim no responsibility for old share purchases. As I flipped through my first MMA Annual Report in 1999 I was appalled at the hefty share of stock in Weyerhaeuser. That year I was working for an environmental firm in Seattle and was aware of Weyerhaeuser's abominable track record as the Northwest's largest timber company, responsible for excessive and irreparable clear-cutting of old-growth forests. Weyerhaeuser was not the only shocker; corporations with even shadier track records accompanied MMA's list. I got on the phone with an MMA buyer, who defended Weyerhaeuser's treatment of employees and was reticent to believe in Weyerhaeuser's clear-cutting history.

I divested everything. My dollars were intended for MMA's core values, but since their report showcased investments incongruous with MMA's stewardship philosophy, I had to divest. Did other MMA investors care where their dollars were channeled? Were they divesting? Why were MMA staffers so uninformed about their companies' track records?

This spring I returned to MMA's Web site to download their 2003 Annual Report, hoping to witness progress in screening processes. Again the report touted investments in McDonalds (destructive deforester, violator of labor standards), Clear Channel Communications (sponsor of pro-Iraq-war rallies), Kraft (owned by tobacco giant Altria, formerly Philip Morris), Coca-Cola (fires workers' rights advocates, abandons factories after depleting local water supplies) and Weyerhaeuser. MMA included Citigroup, Kroger and Time Warner—all companies subjected to national boycotts in recent years. Have MMA's values been put in the back seat while financial considerations take the wheel? (MMA is not the only socially responsible investment firm with a lengthy list of such companies. Domini and Green Century, firms with comparable standards, stay afloat with a "top 10 holdings" list that is incongruous with the values they espouse.)

MMA may invest in these corporations to establish opportunities for shareholder advocacy. Shareholder advocacy can be a catalyst for social change only if brokers and investors are well-informed and attend company meetings regularly. MMA, however, provides little evidence of advocacy work and, in the case of Weyerhaeuser, needed me to substantiate the timber company's destructive track record.

Shareholder advocacy or investment-abstention from corporations worthy of boycotting are the two choices afforded investors. Since MMA chose the former, my hope is that MMA and their investors are mindful of (1) Clear Channel encouraging its 1,000-plus radio stations to host pro-Iraq-war rallies, (2) Coca-Cola's trend in firing advocates of fair-labor practices, eagerness to abandon factories after depleting local water supplies, (3) Kraft's earnings profited by parent company, tobacco giant Altria, (4) McDonald's busting of unionizing attempts to monitor deterioration of workers' rights and (5) Weyerhaeuser's legacy as the Northwest's top logger of old-growth forests.

Does MMA attend the company meetings of Clear Channel, Coca-Cola, Kraft, McDonalds and Weyerhaeuser? Who's campaigning for change in these companies?

If MMA seeks to invest in companies that respect the dignity of all people, build a world free from violence, and practice environmental stewardship, then MMA should implement these values into their purchasing practices. Contact MMA at memberinfo@mma-online.org or at 1-800-348-7468 and insist on investing that is socially responsible. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **I kneel before the Father**—Karl Steffy
- **A man I called father**—Barbara Esch Shisler

From bread and chocolate to guns, war

Restaurant owner joins Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation in Iraq.

وسام عدنان حميد اسماعيل حسين
Wisam Adnan Hameed Ismaeel Hussain

Courtesy photo

Nadine Bechtel, 54, the owner of a flourishing café on Main Street in Goshen, Ind., decided to leave her restaurant to join a Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) delegation to Iraq. Reactions were "all over the map," Bechtel says, when she informed her friends and family she was leaving Goshen and her restaurant, Bread and Chocolate.

Bechtel does not call herself brave because she simply was "doing what I felt like I needed to do."

The CPT delegation stayed in an apartment in Karrada, a quiet, residential neighborhood right across the street from the Tigres River. When the delegation learned Bechtel owns a restaurant, they wanted her to be in charge of cooking. Bechtel enjoyed the challenge of "putting things together without a recipe" and the limitations of only cooking on top of a stove.

The twofold purpose of the CPT team in Iraq included engaging in conversations with Iraqi people and then bringing this information and experience back to the United States. The team talked with people at hospitals, clerics and people on the human rights committee in Iraq.

"The people were very friendly and very open about talking about the situation," she says.

Before Bechtel left for Iraq on April 1, she spoke with her congregation, Eighth Street Mennonite Church in Goshen, about her motives for going and what she hoped to achieve. Someone asked, "When you meet an Iraqi woman, what are you going to say?" Bechtel says she stumbled over her answer.

"I'm not sure that before I went to Iraq I had an answer to that," she says. But Bechtel had to address this question during an awareness vigil on the steps of a mosque (see photo above). At the vigil for the detainees, an Iraqi woman came up to Bechtel, ranting and raving.

"It was all in Arabic. I had no idea what she was talking about," Bechtel says. "She was really mad. Something nasty had happened to her."

Bechtel says she shook her head to show her support and to say, "No matter what it is, I know you are hurting."

The woman drifted back into the crowd, but later came back, gesturing that Bechtel's scarf needed adjusting. Bechtel, unable to fix it properly, motioned for the woman to help. After this exchange the two women shook hands.

"Without any words, we came to a meeting place at the end where she knew that I cared and she knew that I heard," Bechtel says. "It was an amazing thing for me."

Without any words, we came to a meeting place at the end where she knew that I cared and she knew that I heard. —Nadine Bechtel

She and another delegation member flew from Baghdad to Amman, Jordan, to Chicago on April 13, while the rest of the CPT delegation left the following day.

Anxious to share about her experiences, Bechtel was scheduled to speak at six churches and with Goshen High School's Peace Club. However, the transition back to daily life is a challenge, as Bechtel finds it difficult to slide back into her old life in Goshen and at Bread and Chocolate.

"I like my hot, running water and soft bed," she says. "But I will never be the same."—*Anna Groff, communication student at Goshen (Ind.) College, for Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Everett J. Thomas

Nadine Bechtel in her restaurant in Goshen, Ind., with employee Autumn Weimer.

Philippe Antonello © 2003 Icon Distribution Inc.

Passion opens doors in Middle East

Believers have a chance to share their faith 'like never before.'

The film has been allowed into the Middle East because of Gibson's credibility in secular media. As a Hollywood production, the film doesn't come with the label "Christian."

While the debate over the artistic merits and theological soundness of Mel Gibson's film *The Passion of the Christ* rages in the United States, the movie has sparked a basic interest in Jesus Christ in the Middle East, according to Mennonite Mission Network partners. They report an overwhelming turnout in theaters and a new openness to learning about Jesus. In some places *The Passion* is so popular that other films have been canceled so that all theaters can run the movie.

According to Wayne and Jennie Larson (pseudonyms), who work for a Christian media production company in the Middle East, the film has been allowed into the Middle East because of Gibson's credibility in secular media. As a Hollywood production, the film doesn't come with the label "Christian" and can be distributed through the regular channels of other American-made movies. In contrast, the film *Jesus* is banned in many Middle East countries or can only be sold to Christians.

The couple reports: "Quite a number of local papers have run articles on the film—one had a 12-page insert that went through the film scene by scene and printed the Bible passage parallel for comparison. The head of the local Bible Society told me they could not have written a better piece themselves.

"Our marketing director knows the distributor. He was only allowed a license to have five copies of the film. This means only five cinemas can show it at a time. But a number of cinemas are using a technique where one copy is fed through two projectors and shown simultaneously on two screens—doubling the potential audience," the Larsons wrote in a recent letter.

One of the apparent factors in the film's popularity is the condemnation the film has received from Jewish critics for its portrayal of the Jews.

"God is using this film to communicate the gospel and the very opposite spirit that might be motivating people to go and see it," a Christian worker in the Middle East said. "The message to love your enemies and Jesus praying for them to be forgiven while on the cross would hit the Muslim theater-goers in a powerful way."

"Until now we have only been able to show the *Jesus* film in Arabic to a handful of people in the secret of a home setting," one source said. "In two short hours, more people heard the gospel than I have been able to reach in nearly five years of living here."

Local women have asked Christians for a New Testament in Arabic, saying that they and all their friends are interested in reading it. Others are asking their Christian friends where they can find the Arabic Bible on the Internet. Sources attribute this new curiosity to Gibson's film. Reportedly, even people in Saudi Arabia, where there are no movie theaters, are getting a chance to see the film through pirated DVDs.

"God knows what he's doing," one source said, quoting Paul's words in Philippians 1:15-18, "It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so in love. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way [for example, pirated DVDs] the true Christ is preached. And because of this, I rejoice."

Mission Network's partners working in these contexts ask for prayer as Muslims they live and work with see *The Passion*. Doors are opening for conversation about the film and believers have a chance to share their faith and the love of Jesus like never before.—*Mennonite Mission Network News Service*

Eritrean believers face persecution

More than 350 held by government, many kept in shipping containers

"Don't pray that the persecution will stop," Eritrean believers recently told an American missionary who visited them. Instead, they said, "Pray that we will be strong."

It's been 12 years since Eritrea achieved independence from Ethiopia, and two years since many churches were "deregistered." The missionary, who remains anonymous to protect him, visited Eritrea in April to learn how believers with ties to Mennonites are faring in the current situation.

The Eritrean government maintains that it has not closed churches and, in fact, church offices are allowed to remain open. However, believers who meet to worship together are likely to be arrested. The government views them as extremists—the Christian equivalent of Muslim fundamentalists.

Over 350 believers were being held at the time of the missionary's visit. Many of them are being held in shipping containers in tropical heat.

"We want you to tell the world about us," Eritrean believers said. But they cautioned against using names, either personal or denominational. The missionary tasted a bit of what brothers and sisters in Eritrea face as he accompanied leaders to prayer meetings.

"We went from house to house after dark," he said. "Doors were locked and lights were turned out for secrecy. It was like nothing else I have ever experienced.

"Up to 18 people would pack into a small room. The order of service started with about one hour of prayer for personal repentance, followed by repentance for the nation and prayer for the infilling of the Holy Spirit and power to resist evil. A teaching followed, and then another hour of prayer, before moving to another area and home to start the same process over. At times, when someone knocked on the door, people seemed a bit anxious. The believers left two-by-two over a period of about a half hour, to avoid the appearance of a large gathering."

The missionary asked the believers of Eritrea what message they had for the North American Church.

"Tell the church to be strong and to stand for truth even if it is costly," they said.

The missionary reported that persecuted groups maintain denominational identities but cooperate freely. Christians in Orthodox, Catholic and Evangelical Lutheran churches are not currently under legal restrictions.—*Holly Blosser Yoder for Eastern Mennonite Missions News Service*

SUDAN
SAUDI ARABIA
Red Sea
Nak'fa
ERITREA
Keren
Āk'ordat
Massawa
ASMARA
Dahlak Archipelago
YEMEN
Tio
Hanish
Assab
ETHIOPIA
T'ana Hayk'
0 75 150 km
0 75 150 mi
DJIBOUTI

Believers who meet to worship together are likely to be arrested. The government views them as extremists

Meat canning hits half-million mark

Everett J. Thomas

For the first time since the Mennonite Central Committee portable canner went on the road in 1946, the annual total has broken the half-million cans mark. Danisa Ndlovu (left), president of Mennonite World Conference and Brethren in Christ bishop from Zimbabwe, visited one of MCC's meat-canning stops in Goshen, Ind., last March. Stanley Pletcher of rural Goshen, hosted Danisa on a tour of the canning process at MCC's material aid center.

The October 2003 to April 2004 canning season yielded 504,174 cans of turkey, beef, pork and broth, an increase of 47,268 over last season's total.

The canner and canning crew travel to communities across the United States and Canada. Local volunteers donate meat—most of which is now purchased rather than raised by volunteers themselves—and help the MCC crew cut, cook, stir and can it. Already some of this year's meat is on its way to Bosnia, Haiti, North Korea and Ukraine. Meat is also distributed in the United States and Canada. A much-valued source of protein for families impacted by war, disaster and poverty, each can feeds five to 10 people.—*MCC News Service*

Mennonite schools see combined gain

But enrollment in colleges, universities dropped 5.1 percent from 2002 levels.

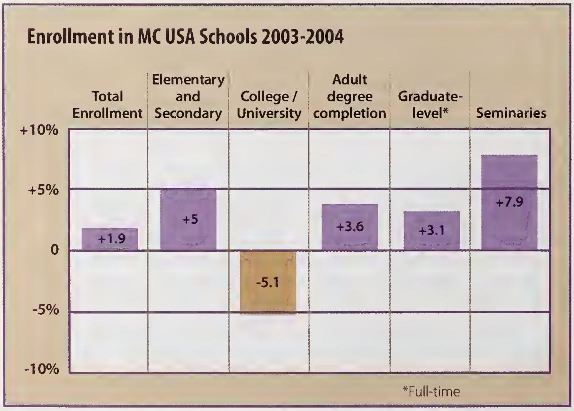
There is tremendous excitement about the increase in seminary enrollment at a time when [the church] has been talking about the need for pastoral leadership.—Carlos Romero

To better understand the experiences of nearly 15,000 students in the 39 schools (preschool through seminary) affiliated with Mennonite Education Agency and to identify trends, the MEA board of directors calls for annual reports from Mennonite elementary and secondary schools, colleges, universities and seminaries. The reports also help MEA identify trends in Mennonite-related education.

"MEA is mandated to represent all levels of Mennonite education in the United States and works with schools in Puerto Rico and Canada through the elementary and secondary councils," says Carlos Romero, executive director for MEA. "By having reports from all levels we are able to get a glimpse of what is happening in Mennonite education at the local level and as a whole. This is important for understanding the challenges and strengths of each school."

According to this year's reports, compiled for an MEA board meeting in March, Mennonite education as a whole expanded last fall. MEA-related institutions enrolled 14,885 students for a 1.9 percent increase over the previous year. Accounting for the growth was a rise in headcounts in the seminaries (7.9 percent), elementary and secondary schools (5 percent) and adult degree completion programs (3.6 percent). The most significant rise was a 16 percent increase in students enrolled full-time in Mennonite seminaries.

"We are glad for the overall increase in enrollment," Romero says. "There is tremendous excitement and joy about the increase in seminary enrollment at a time when [the church] has been talking about the need for pastoral leadership. At the same time, we are concerned about the areas of decrease in enrollment in undergraduate schools and graduate programs and at the younger end of the educational spectrum."


Enrollment in MC USA Schools 2003-2004

*Full-time

The number of full-time students enrolled in undergraduate programs at colleges and universities fell by 5.1 percent when compared with the previous year; the difference from 2002 was sharper in the area of part-time enrollment, which dropped by 13.9 percent. Graduate programs decreased in the number of part-time students by 11.9 percent but increased by 3.1 percent in full-time enrollees.

"Our schools are reaching out in positive ways," Romero says. "Efforts at being missional are clearly succeeding in attracting non-Mennonite students. The student experience is enhanced by going to class side-by-side both with people who are similar and people who are different in their values and how they view the world."

Romero also notes that the Mennonite Education Agency must address how to get more Mennonite young people to attend Mennonite schools. "We want our schools to grow, because we know Mennonite education institutions offer both exceptional academic preparation and something unique, hopeful and helpful for the world: the Anabaptist framework for understanding how we should live our lives and how that influences all our decisions."

Romero cites a number of dynamic things happening in Mennonite schools, including responses by secondary schools and higher education to the war in Iraq and school efforts to incorporate service into their annual calendars and curricula.

The increasing diversity in the population of Mennonite schools is also exciting, Romero says. Based on headcount, people of racial-ethnic groups comprise 13.28 percent of the undergraduate enrollment, 13.99 percent of the graduate enrollment and 12.1 percent of the seminary enrollment. He observes that in this area, too, MEA schools are succeeding in missional efforts to attract non-Mennonite people of racial-ethnic groups, but must work at access issues and increasing numbers of Mennonites in this demographic.

Romero recently returned from a meeting of MEA's Racial-Ethnic Leadership Education Advisory Council, which focused on how to increase access for students from Mennonite churches that are racially and ethnically diverse.

"We need to realize that the changing demographics of the country and the church will have—and are already having—a tremendous impact on education," he says. "The opportunity here is to expand our tent, as we open ourselves to people of all racial-ethnic backgrounds and learn how to enjoy, appreciate, love and learn from our increasing diversity."—*MEA News Service*

Stance on national anthem costs school

Central Christian School targeted by local media, Veterans of Foreign Wars

Amid a wave of patriotism surrounding the war in Iraq, Central Christian School's practice of not playing the national anthem at sporting events apparently has exacted a high toll.

In the past year, dozens of students have withdrawn. Next fall, resulting layoffs will shrink the school's staff.

Superintendent Frederic Miller says in the past year the Ohio Mennonite Conference school in Kidron, Ohio, has lost about 50 students, in part because of its adherence to Mennonite peace teachings.

In a typical year, Miller says, only about a dozen students might withdraw for various reasons. But the magnitude of these pullouts, Miller says, "was totally bizarre. ... It was a totally off-the-wall occurrence."

This year, Miller says, Central has 357 students, down from more than 400 in 2002-03, when the school had the highest enrollment in its 43-year history. Enrollment includes preschool through 12th grade.

Miller says school officials tried to determine the cause of the large pullout and eventually focused on three factors. The first was a general economic downturn, making private education harder to afford, followed by the cancellation of an on-campus orientation day due to a snowstorm. Such events often yield new enrollments.

But the issue attracting the most attention has been the school's policy of not playing the national anthem at sporting events. The policy garnered bad publicity when the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq began in March 2003.

Miller says that around the time the war began, the *Wooster Daily Record* ran a story focusing on Central's anthem policy, which has not changed since the school opened in 1961.

The story included several inaccurate assertions, Miller says, including that Central fans attending games elsewhere refuse to stand when the anthem is played. Amid the atmosphere surrounding the war, "these unfactual statements made us sound unpatriotic and even rebellious," Miller says.

It didn't stop there.

Next came a letter-writing campaign criticizing the school by members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Miller says. Letters arrived nearly every day during one period. By the end of the spring term, Miller says, the withdrawals had begun and were outpacing new enrollments. But it wasn't until midsummer that officials realized a serious trend was under way.

"It broadsided us all," Miller says.

Though some parents gave no reason for withdrawing their children, "we do know of several families who were embarrassed by our stance [on the anthem]," Miller says.

Fred Miller

This included a number of Mennonites—which Miller says indicated divided convictions about the war in the local Mennonite community.

The bottom line for Central is that the withdrawals made cutbacks in faculty, administration and staff necessary.

Once the degree of the crisis was realized, Miller says, school staff were told in January that the equivalent of eight full-time positions would have to be cut, effective this fall.

Miller says faculty and staff has been very cooperative and professional during the crisis. Teachers voluntarily took a cut in benefits, saving nearly $200,000. So far, only minor adjustments have been made to Central's curriculum or extracurricular activities, Miller says, only a "significant restructuring" of personnel.

Teachers voluntarily took a cut in benefits, saving nearly $200,000.

Despite the bad publicity and the withdrawals, Miller says donations have been up in the past year. A capital drive to retire school debt—the majority a result of this year's enrollment decline—is under way, with half the $200,000 pledged. This response, Miller says, indicated to him a general reaffirmation of the school by the community.—*Robert Rhodes of* Mennonite Weekly Review

High school chapel at Central Christian School in Kidron, Ohio

Courtesy photo

Paul's sea voyages focus of sabbatical

Stutzman couple will retrace Mediterranean Sea routes in 33-foot sailboat.

There have been many studies of Paul and his role in the development of the early Christian church, but I'm not aware of anyone else having taken this [sailing] approach.
—Linford Stutzman

Jim Bishop

Linford and Janet Stutzman display a compass given them by EMU students. They will use it to navigate their sailing vessel while retracing the missionary journeys of Paul.

Two modern-day admirers of a first-century apostle will spend the next year following his mighty big footprints. Linford L. and Janet M. Stutzman have embarked on a contemporary missionary journey from their home in Harrisonburg, Va., trying to understand what the Apostle Paul experienced in his missionary travels that crisscrossed the Mediterranean region. For 15 months, they will retrace Paul's routes to every site mentioned in the book of Acts.

Stutzman, who teaches two-thirds-time at Eastern Mennonite Seminary and one-third-time in Eastern Mennonite University's undergraduate Bible and religion department, is beginning a sabbatical year. His spouse, Janet, recently announced her resignation from the university after serving 12½ years as director of alumni-parent relations.

"Our goal is to seek to understand how the geographic areas, the weather conditions and the cities and towns themselves … affected Paul's mission and vision for what the church could become," Stutzman says.

The Stutzmans have secured a 33-foot, two-mast ketch for sailing on the Mediterranean and Aegean seas from one port-of-call to another.

"It's old but seaworthy," they say of the craft they have rechristened "SailingActs." The couple planned to begin their itinerary on the island of Cyprus off the coast of Greece the end of May. From there, they will work their way slowly counter-clockwise around the Aegean (Turkey and Greece), ending in Corinth in October.

At each site visited, the Stutzmans will explore the geographical situation and new archeological discoveries in an attempt to glean new insights into biblical accounts related to Paul's missionary work. They plan to interview local and regional experts of history, religion and mission along with local inhabitants in order to explore traditional and current perceptions of Paul and his legacy.

They will also sail the same sea routes as Paul, anchor in the harbors and travel overland to the sites in ways that parallel, as closely as possible, Paul's experiences detailed in the book of Acts.

"There have been many studies of Paul and his role in the development of the early Christian church, but I'm not aware of anyone else having taken this [sailing] approach," Stutzman says.

The Stutzmans plan to spend the early winter months living aboard the boat in Israel, working on sabbatical writing and teaching projects.

"That time of year is not an ideal time to be out to sea," Stutzman says, noting that Paul's shipwreck on the Island of Malta—documented in Acts 27—likely happened in November.

Stutzman is hoping to prepare two manuscripts based on their research—a reflective travelogue in popular style on what Paul's travels meant to him and in turn interpret those meanings for contemporary society and a missiology piece that applies these learnings to the globalization process, the way nations relate to each other today.

Janet Stutzman says she expects to assist with navigating and other sailing duties and buying supplies, doing some cooking on the ship and assisting her spouse with chronicling their adventures.

"I thoroughly enjoy meeting and offering hospitality to people, and I expect to be doing a lot of that in this cross-cultural setting," she says.

The Stutzmans will post regular journal entries on a special Web site at: www.emu.edu/sailingacts.—*Jim Bishop for EMU News Service*

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CALENDAR

Bethany Christian School's *50th Anniversary Celebration* June 11-13. Registration and history book order forms are available at www.bethanycs.net or by calling 574-534-2567.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Allen, Joshua Brant, April 22, to Joe and Annastasia Stucky Allen, Hutchinson, Kan.

Bachman, Jordan Marie, April 11, to Derek and Stephanie Crawford Bachman, Washington, Iowa.

Barrett, Elijah Gabriel, March 17, to Rick and Kim Souder Barrett, Goshen, Ind.

Brunk, Bransten McGrath, March 1, to Duane and Michelle Bartel Brunk, Buhler, Kan.

Cassel, Sophia Rose, April 29, to Michael and Laurie Derstine Cassel, Green Lane, Pa.

Dooley, Addison Paige, April 16, to Cris and Lisa Franz Dooley, Wichita, Kan.

Eichelberger, Kate Lauren, April 26, to Lynn and Lorie Schmidt Eichelberger, Moundridge, Kan.

Estes, Katherine Lilyan, Feb. 3, to Tim and Pam Estes, Woodbridge, Va.

Eubanks, Sarah Eden, March 12, to Jason and Becky Loeffelholz Eubanks, Ottumwa, Iowa.

Garber, Fiona Coleen, March 24, to Jeremy and Buffy Cummins Garber, Goshen, Ind.

Grittman, Abigail Elise, April 7, to Brad and Nancy Bertsche Grittman, Lenexa, Kan.

Hartford, Cadence Lynn, March 27, to Tyler and Genessa Brenneman Hartford, Toledo, Ohio.

Hostetter, Mary Lois, May 3, to Clark and Jenny Spory Hostetter, Boswell, Pa.

Landis, Elias James, April 28, to Matthew and Tana Landis, East Greenville, Pa.

Lantz, Nevin David, April 28, to Cathy Lantz, Broadway, Va.

Lundgren, Nathaniel Erik, April 19, to Erik and Tami Wiens Lundgren, Kansas City, Mo.

Lyndaker, Nicholas Jeffrey, April 27, to Jeffrey and Deborah Danehy Lyndaker, Canton, N.Y.

McDowell, Liam Jonathan, April 22, to Scott and Becci Zook McDowell, Elkhart, Ind.

Miller, Austin Patrick, April 30, to Rick and Dawn Witmer Miller, Goshen, Ind.

Omlor, Gabriel Marcus, March 11, to Kyle and Holly Omlor, Toledo, Ohio.

Rempel, Sara Moser, April 13, to Phil and Teresa Moser Rempel, Albany, Ore.

Roth, Carter Wayne, April 27, to Jackson and Jasmin Mateer Roth, Lincoln, Neb.

Schlabach, Davis Haywood, April 29, to Brad and Amy Wiseman Schlabach, Sarasota, Fla.

Sharp, Matthew Gregory, April 28, to Greg and Susan Fagley Sharp, Elizabethtown, Pa.

Siegrist, Anneka Elizabeth, May 5, to Brent and Katrina Mullet Siegrist, Nairobi, Kenya.

Sommers, Sophia Mae, May 3, to Gary and Charla Steiner Sommers, North Canton, Ohio.

Stjernholm, Nathan Richard, April 27, to Rick and Angie Steiner Stjernholm, Erie, Pa.

Stoltzfus, Jacob Rueben, April 12, to Rueben Stoltzfus and Rose Shenk, Iowa City, Iowa.

Stoner, Carter William and Nathan William (twins), Feb. 20, to Tim and Laura Hubbard Stoner, Kouts, Ind.

Umble, Joshua Douglas, May 1, to Doug and Karen Umble, Lititz, Pa.

Vallejo, Antonio, Feb. 28, to Fred and Sarah Trevino Vallejo, Toledo, Ohio.

Weldy, Nicholas Patrick, April 5, to Mark and Kelly McComish Weldy, Elkhart, Ind.

Yoder, Cora Darlene, May 4, to Jeff and Lisa Swartzendruber Yoder, Hesston, Kan.

Zimmerman, Adam Christopher, April 15, to Jeremy and Janelle Martin Zimmerman, Lititz, Pa.

MARRIAGES

An/Ratzlaff: Sanghee An, Wichita, Kan., and Corey Ratzlaff, Wichita, May 8 at Aldersgate United Methodist Church, Wichita.

Bauman/Yoder: Heather Bauman, Mechanicsburg, Pa., and Justin Yoder, Harrisonburg, Va., May 1 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

Michaels/Yohn: Andrew Michaels, Millersburg, Ohio, and Christy Yohn, Greencastle, Pa., Dec. 13, 2003 at Antrim Brethren in Christ Church, Greencastle.

Mummau/Peachey: Jewel Mummau, East Waterford, Pa., and Lavern Peachey, Barrville, Pa., April 24 at Lost Creek Mennonite Church, Mifflintown, Pa.

Riley/Stutzman: Joel Riley, Milford, Neb., and Benita Stutzman, Milford, April 10 at Beth-El Mennonite Church, Milford.

DEATHS

Barr, Ethel Wain, 71, Denver, Colo., died April 20. Spouse: Kenneth Barr (deceased). Parents: Urho and Ruth Wain. Funeral: April 30 at Glennon Heights Mennonite Church, Lakewood, Colo.

Baughman, Mary Martin, 92, Kouts, Ind., died March 27. Spouse: Paul Baughman. Parents: William and Amelia Birky Martin. Funeral: March 30 at Hopewell Mennonite Church, Kouts.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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Birky, Wilbert, 84, Foosland, Ill., died April 29. Spouse: Viola Zehr Birky. Parents: John S. and Fannie L. Naffziger Birky. Children: Roger, Dennis, Mervin, W. Don, Sandra Miller, Lindra Ramirez, Tamra Keim; 23 grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 3 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Ill.

Brenneman, Calvin M., 90, Portland, Ore., died April 30. Spouse: Velma Whitaker Brenneman (deceased). Parents: Moses and Orpha Brenneman. Children: Cal, Del; four grandchildren. Funeral: May 6 at Albany (Ore.) Mennonite Church.

Chittick, John K., 88, Doylestown, Pa., died March 19. Spouse: Sarah Godshalk Chittick. Parents: Edward and Bertha Myers Chittick. Children: Robert, Suzanne Phillips, Alyce Curtis, Donald; 12 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 25 at Doylestown Mennonite Church.

Cummings, Erma, 75, Elkhart, Ind., died April 13. Spouse: Andrew Cummings (deceased). Parents: Ernest and Lula Van Horn Ewers. Funeral: April 15 at Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Goering, Opal Flickner, 82, McPherson, Kan., died April 25 of cancer. Spouse: David Goering (deceased). Parents: John and Emma Flickner. Children: Diane Houchen, Duane; two grandchildren. Funeral: April 28 at First Mennonite Church, McPherson.

Hershberger, Paul, 94, Glendale, Ariz., died May 6. Spouse: Iola Hershberger. Parents: Joseph and Lucretia Miller Hershberger. Children: Marlin, Arlen, Connie Stoltzfus; eight grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 8 at Trinity Mennonite Church, Glendale.

Isaak, Jacob Lyle, 76, Eagle, Idaho, died April 23. Spouse: Margaret Nugent Isaak. Parents: Jocob and Rose Bud Isaak. Children: Teresa Anderson, Jeff, Marilyn Talbot; 11 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 27 at First Mennonite Church, Aberdeen, Idaho.

King, Harold, 82, Valparaiso, Ind., died March 10. Spouse: Uarda King. Parents: Joe and Katie Roggy King. Children: Byron, Judy Bachert, Jan Trulley, Rodney, Keith, Marvin. Funeral: March 15 at Hopewell Mennonite Church, Kouts, Ind.

Miller, Carl S., 86, Elkhart, Ind., died April 15. Spouse: Carol Beller Miller. Parents: Paul and Maude Fisher Miller. Children: Peter W., Evan J.; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 18 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Stoltzfus, Mary Ellen Moyer, 62, Honey Brook, Pa., died May 4 of a brain tumor. Spouse: Leroy J. Stoltzfus. Parents: Ellis and Edna Springer Moyer. Children: Dawn Dennis, Gayle Richardson; one grandchild. Funeral: May 8 at Conestoga Mennonite Church, Morgantown, Pa.

Stucky, Wilhelmena Claassen, 91, Newton, Kan., died May 2. Spouse: Irvin Stucky (deceased). Parents: Rudolph and Allie Johnson Claassen. Children: Gordon, Norman, Mary Enz; 12 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 5 at First Mennonite Church, Newton.

Sutter, Mick (Forrest Clayton), 85, Kouts, Ind., died March 19. Parents: Lee and Iva Reinhardt Sutter. Children: Diane Martin, Gary; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 22 at Hopewell Mennonite Church, Kouts.

Yoder, Marie, 90, Bloomington, Ill., died April 19. Spouse: Judge Walter Yoder (deceased). Parents: Tann and Lulu Van Sickle Marquis. Children: James W., Kay M. Thompson; seven grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 22 at Mennonite Church of Normal (Ill.).

Help send *The Mennonite* to overseas mission workers! Send donations to *The Mennonite*, OMWL fund, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526.

Wanted: Experienced writers for Sunday school curriculum

The Mennonite Church USA, Mennonite Church Canada, and Church of the Brethren are cooperating to produce a new Sunday school curriculum. Units will be designed for children who are aged 2-4, kindergarten to grade 2, grades 3-5, and grades 6-8. Two additional units will be a multi-age unit for children of a variety of ages or for intergenerational use, and a unit for parents and other adult caregivers of children. First use of the curriculum will be Fall 2006.

For more information, please contact:

Anna Speicher, Project Director
Church of the Brethren General Offices
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Telephone: 847-742-5100 ext. 209.

Email: aspeicher_gb@brethren.org.

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St. John Mennonite Church in Pandora, Ohio, a 600+ evangelical Mennonite church, is seeking an ***associate pastor of outreach, discipleship and assimilation.*** Applicants should have a degree in biblical studies, strong relational skills, plus administrative ability. Gifts in discipling new believers, shepherding the congregation, overseeing small group ministries and community outreach a must. Experience with young adults and college ministries a plus. Contact Dan Amstutz for more information at dan.amstutz@cnh.com or call him at 419-384-3366.

Germantown Mennonite Church in Philadelphia seeks candidate for ***interim pastoral role*** to begin September. Candidate should have strong commitment to Anabaptist beliefs, concern for issues of peace and justice, and have appropriate academic and experience credentials. GMC is an urban, diverse congregation of 100+ members, and welcomes nontraditional applicants. Reply to Search Committee, Germantown Mennonite Church, 21 W. Washington Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19144, or GermantownMennonite@juno.com.

Applications are being received for the position of ***executive director*** at **Cove Valley Youth Camp** near Mercersburg, Pa. This position will be available in July. This person is responsible for the overall operation of the camp, including rentals, promotion, hiring and supervising staff. The executive director works with the program director in managing the summer youth camps and with the caretaker in overseeing the camp facilities. Please send resumé to Del Martin, 1910 Spring View Drive, Chambersburg, PA 17201, or email del@delprint.com.

Kalona Mennonite Church in Kalona, Iowa, seeks a one-quarter-time ***music coordinator*** and a one-quarter-time ***coordinator of discipleship and fellowship programs.*** If an applicant is qualified for both positions, these could be combined into one half-time position. For job descriptions and more information call 319-656-2736 or email kmcbonnie@kctc.net. Applications are due by June 30.

Living Water Community Christian Fellowship is a dynamic 23-year-old congregation in New Hamburg, Ont. New Hamburg is a growing community 20 minutes from Kitchener-Waterloo. We are looking for a full-time ***pastor*** sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading, seeking to build relationships in our community. We have a contemporary style of worship, a vibrant small group program, an active outreach into our community. Starting date is January 2005. Living Water is part of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. Closing date is June 30.

For further information contact Muriel Bechtel, MCEC, Kitchener, Ont.; phone 519-650-3806; fax 519-650-3947; or Living Water Fellowship, 519-662-3300.

Light of Life Mennonite Church seeks part-time ***pastor*** to lead growing 10-year-old multicultural church at Farmington, N.M. Located in the northwest corner of the state, Farmington lies at the edge of the Navajo reservation, near the Four Corners, an hour from the nearest ski resort and near many world famous cultural and geographical wonders. Applicant should have calling to serve in preaching and teaching, encouraging and discipling new believers.

Contact Dan Spare, chair, Search Committee, 3808 Country Club Drive, Farmington, NM 87402; phone 505-324-8288; email mdspare@asae.org.

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Mennonite Secondary Education Council

Freeport Mennonite Church, a rural church with close proximity to Madison, Wis., and Rockford, Ill., and Chicago is seeking a full-time lead **pastor.** Position available immediately. Average attendance approximately 90-110. Desire individual with strong preaching, teaching ministry; someone with a vision for growth.

If you feel God's leading to discuss this position with us or can recommend someone else, contact Mike Murray, Search Committee chair, 815-449-2354; jeanettemurray@juno.com.

Adriel, Inc., a TFA-certified sponsored agency providing foster care and residential treatment services in West Liberty, Ohio, seeks visionary ***CEO*** with strong financial acumen/operational experience. Minimum candidate requirements are: Christian actively involved in congregation, appreciation of Mennonite-Anabaptist heritage, master's level education, eight years of senior management experience and strong interpersonal skills.

Send inquiries to Kirk Stiffney, Mennonite Health Services, 234 S. Main St., Suite A, Goshen, IN 46526; fax 574-534-3254; or email kirkstiffney@msn.com.

Hinkletown Mennonite School seeks applicants for elementary teaching position. Come be part of supportive and professional Christian school staff in 2004-05 school year. Contact Thomas Burnett, Principal, 272 Wanner Road, Ephrata, PA 17522; 717-354-6705; email tburnett@hms.pvt.k12.pa.us; Web page www.hms.pvt.k12.pa.us.

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School seeks applicants for the following full-time positions:

Director of advancement: This person will provide overall staff leadership in the areas of fund-raising, alumni relations, marketing and communication. A bachelor's degree in education, business or related field is required, with a minimum of five year's experience in one of the above fields, including at least one year's experience in a supervisory capacity.

Physical education instructor.

Send resumé to Elaine A. Moyer, Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446; fax 215-362-2943; email eamoyer@christopherdock.org.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking applicants for the position of ***director of admissions*** for undergraduate programs. This full-time position requires an individual who can work in a highly visible, goal-oriented environment. The primary responsibility is to lead the admissions team to achieve university enrollment targets through promotional strategies, staff training and motivation, and interaction with campus-wide committees and initiatives. The position reports to the vice president for enrollment and marketing. A bachelor's degree and prior experience in admissions is required. Master's degree preferred. Position is available July 1, and the search committee will begin to review applications immediately. Position will remain open until filled.

For more information visit our Web site at www.emu.edu. Send letter of application, resumé and three references to Human Resources Office, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; 540-432-4108 or hr@emu.edu. People who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

A scholarship, the ***Dwight Moody Wiebe Endowment Fund,*** is available to **former Mennonite Central Committee volunteers** who are enrolled in graduate programs. The scholarship was established by Margot Wiebe of Dallas, Texas, in memory of her husband, Dwight Moody Wiebe, who died in January 2000. Dwight Wiebe served with MCC during the 1950s, including four years as Europe director of MCC's Pax program for alternative military service.

A minimum of $390 Cdn./$250 U.S. is available to candidates who fulfill each of the following requirements: (1) applicant has completed an assignment with MCC of at least two years; (2) applicant is actively enrolled in an accredited graduate school; (3) applicant completed his/her term with MCC no more than three years before enrolling in graduate school.

Contact Carol Eby-Good by Sept. 30 for 2004-2005 academic year. MCC Akron-Human Resources, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; fax 717-859-2171; email ceg@mcc.org.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.15 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available.

To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Marla Cole, or email TheMennonite@TheMennonite.org.

RESOURCES

Ancient-Future Evangelism: Making Your Church a Faith-Forming Community by Robert E. Webber (Baker Books, 2003, $14.99) presents a model of evangelism and discipleship rooted in Scripture, attested to in the history of the church and authentic to the postmodern world in which we live.

Meditation by Richard W. Chilson (Sorin Books, 2004, $13.95) and **Journal Keeping** by Carl J. Koch (Sorin Books, 2004, $12.95) are part of a series, Exploring a Great Spiritual Practice, which combines easily understood practice tools with comprehensive, credible information about the origin, theory and contemporary relevance of the practice.

Hearing Our Teacher's Voice: Pursuit of Faithfulness at Bethany Christian Schools, 1954-2004 ($14.95 plus shipping and handling) includes alumni vignettes and many photographs. To order call 574-534-2567 or visit www.bethanycs.net.

Islam at the Crossroads: Understanding Its Beliefs, History and Conflicts by Paul Marshall, Roberta Green and Lela Gilbert (Baker Book House, 2002, $11.95) traces the history of Islam, explores the differences between the militant groups and the peaceful majority of Muslim people and considers which form of Islam will prevail. It's available at www.worldvisionresources.com.

The Ecumenical Future, edited by Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Eerdmans, 2004, $24), presents the scholarly studies by 16 theologians who developed last year's book **In One Body Through the Cross**, a statement on the present state and future possibilities of modern ecumenism.

Life Is Changed, Not Ended by Virginia Smith (Ave Maria Press, 2004, $11.95) explores the foundations of our attitudes about life, death and resurrection and provides practical advice on advance planning.

Who Are the Anabaptists? Amish, Brethren, Hutterites and Mennonites by Donald B. Kraybill (Herald Press, 2004, $7.99) provides a sweeping overview of these groups' beliefs and practices as well as their similarities and differences.

Beyond the Ordinary: Ten Strengths of U.S. Congregations by Cynthia Woolever and Deborah Bruce (Westminster John Knox Press, 2004, $14.95) takes results from the U.S. Congregational Life Survey and describes the qualities evident in strong congregations and develops congregational applications from those findings.

Praying the Movies II: More Daily Meditations from Classic Films by Edward McNulty (Westminster John Knox Press, 2004, $15.95) presents 31 devotionals that connect movies with the spiritual life of moviegoers.

The full content of **Hymnal: A Worship Book** ($24.99) is available in a lay-flat design, with spiral binding. Pages are oversized for easy reading. Order from Faith & Life Resources, 800-245-7894.

Vocation: Discerning Our Callings in Life by Douglas J. Schuurman (Eerdmans, 2004, $20) argues that in order to combat the bureaucratic, individualistic tenor of American cultural and institutional life, Christians must recover the language, meaning and reality of life as vocation.

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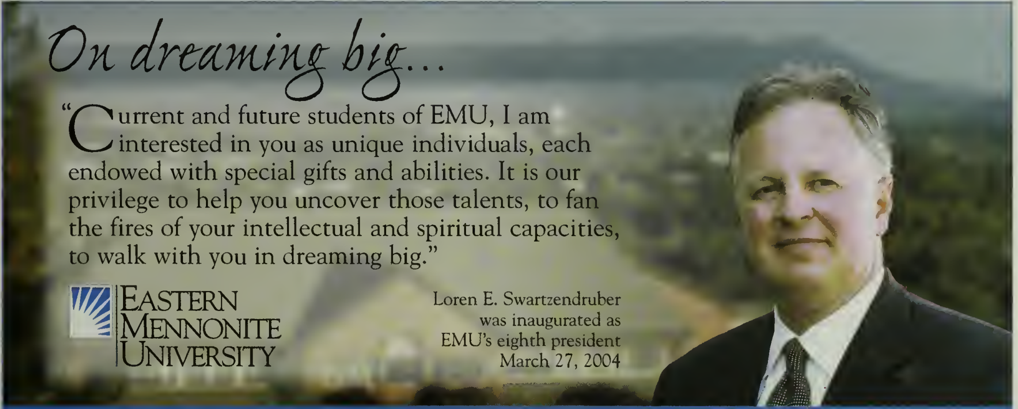

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Everett J. Thomas

Tipping points

Tipping point: *n. In epidemiology, the concept that small changes will have little or no effect on a system until a critical mass is reached. Then a further small change "tips" the system and a large effect is observed.*

According to Susan Mark Landis and Daryl Byler, the situation in Iraq appears to be at a tipping point. They believe our prayers and actions should be included in the precarious balance, and they are producing an advisory for Mennonite Church USA congregations. (Landis serves as peace advocate for Mennonite Church USA; Byler directs Mennonite Central Committee's Washington Office.)

We agree. Furthermore, the situation in Iraq has also created a possible tipping point for our identity as U.S. Mennonites. One small change can lead to a great effect. It's time for a change.

The first way we can effect change is through prayer: regular, persistent prayer that God's will be done "on earth as it is in heaven." Prayer is, after all, our main weapon (Ephesians 6:10-18) in the swirl of principalities and powers that leave us dazed and confused about the diabolic spiral of events in the Middle East.

But our church can also take action. We can be God's stewards of the influence we have as citizens of the United States. Mennonite Church USA members and congregations can use this power to call for genuine transfer of power to the Iraqis.

The situation in Iraq has created a possible tipping point for our identity as Mennonites in the United States.

Rebuilding this tortured country needs to be guided by the international community—through the United Nations—with broad representation from neighboring Arab countries and from the Islamic community. In addition, the United States should continue to pay for much of the rebuilding, with few strings attached.

Finally, the Christian church in the West—perhaps led by the historic peace churches—should open a broad initiative to build new and rebuild damaged relationships with Middle Eastern religious leaders whose view of Christianity has been stained by our country's sins and violent excesses.

What will it take for us all to speak with one voice on this matter—especially in the run-up to a presidential election?

One step will be for many of us to unhook ourselves from political party loyalties. Any attempt to use the ugliness and tragedies in Iraq for gain by the Democratic party is unconscionable. At the same time, any of us who give uncritical support to President Bush and his administration must search our souls to discover if that support is driven by inappropriate loyalty to the Republican party.

We are first of all citizens of God's kingdom, and second, citizens of the United States. Once again we find ourselves caught between our loyalty to the country in which we live and the kingdom in which we will live forever.

However, there are responsibilities that come with our secondary citizenship. With a denominational name that identifies us with the country in which we live, we also have an opportunity to speak as a U.S. church. But Mennonite Church USA has made no formal statement about the war in Iraq during 2004. Now is the time for our denomination to take a position about the current situation and to call every member and congregation to prayer and action.

The Executive Board meets June 24-26 in Harrisonburg, Va. The timing of this meeting is perfect for a call to action: The meeting occurs shortly before the June 30 deadline for power in Iraq to be transferred from the United States and its allies to a new Iraqi government. Further, a statement by the Executive Board in late June would be available (electronically) to all congregations in time for the July 4 "special Sunday" now called Christian Citizenship Sunday.

July 4 is Independence Day in our country. Our denomination observes the first Sunday in July as Christian Citizenship Sunday. This year, the confluence of these two days is either ironic or providential. Regardless, the moment is right for us all to speak together about the situation in Iraq. Perhaps such an action will tip our world toward greater peace. Perhaps such action will also tip us toward a new identity as a U.S. peace church.—*ejt with gh*

The Mennonite

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the fatherhood of God

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Seek peace and pursue it in the home

Gilberto Flores serves as director of leadership development and denominational minister for Mennonite Church USA. He served 25 years as a pastor and church planter in Guatemala, Honduras and Texas.

A newspaper story told of a crime involving a young man accused of taking the life of a 3-month-old girl. The act of violence toward the child was brutal. She was struck on the head and bitten several place on her body. The mother of the child mourned her loss and admitted that she never imagined her boyfriend could be guilty of such a terrible act, an opinion shared by the young man's mother. This suggests that many of the most violent acts are carried out by people we do not consider capable of such behavior.

This may be nothing more than one of many similar reports about human conduct. But because the mother is only 19, this event affects my commitment as a pastor and the ethical aspects of my faith. This report moved me. Above all it brought to mind the continual problem of domestic violence, a problem wrapped in the silence of those involved and in conscious indifference. In the bosom of the home, hidden from outside witnesses, children are abused and mistreated, and the wife endures physical and psychological violence detrimental to her personal dignity.

Institutions seek to guide and educate those involved so that these acts of violence do not continue. They denounce the abuse in order to create an awareness of the situation. However, the challenge exceeds their ability to respond fully.

What does this type of report tell us Christians about our responsibility? As Mennonites we emphasize peace, justice and nonviolence, values we see as inherent in the gospel we proclaim. Domestic violence presents a challenge to the church and its values. Peace is not indifference or passivity. Justice is not an abstract concept. Nonviolence does not mean immobility. Domestic violence is a condition of death, an expression that opposes life. It demonstrates the level of human baseness without redemption and far from the transformation Jesus Christ is able to produce. The church is a part of society and often reflects the conduct of society. For that reason it is reasonable to presume there is violent conduct within the families of church members. This conduct affects the family group profoundly and blocks the vision that relates to "shalom," the true meaning of the gospel. It is necessary to remember there are emotional, psychological and spiritual injuries produced by violence that generate a rejection of the faith and many times lead to the decision to abandon the church.

What can the church do? To begin we must turn our attention to the inner life of our congregations and establish the connection between following Christ and a nonviolent life. It is necessary to emphasize the need for conversion and the urgency to strengthen the Christian family, to motivate families to reject the custom of controlling, dominating and manipulating relationships. We must teach that peace is not simply a part of our religious heritage or a custom we can accept. We must teach that it is a fruit of conversion, a gift of the Holy Spirit. We must turn to the peace found in Christ, to commit ourselves to follow Jesus on the path of peace.

We must also help married couples understand, recognize and accept that in Christ they are more than husbands and wives; they are brothers and sisters in Christ, and according to the Bible their children are a gift of God. At that point, after an honest effort directed toward the destruction of the culture of violence within family relations, let us try to be coherent messengers in the violent world around us. Let us remember the words of Jesus: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Mark 10:14b, NIV). And let us remember the words of Peter: "Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers" (1 Peter 3:7, NIV).

TheMennonite

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This issue of *The Mennonite* may have arrived late. Because the U.S. postal system was closed on Friday, June 11 (our normal mailing date), to observe the death of President Reagan, this issue was mailed on Monday, June 14.

Mission agencies won't merge

I was surprised by Marie Martin's letter expressing her disappointment that Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) is not joining Mennonite Mission Network (Readers Say, May 18).

Mennonite Mission Network along with Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions (VMBM) and EMM were part of an extended discernment process leading to the development of collaborative mission structures that best serve the families, congregations and conferences of Mennonite Church USA. Nowhere in the conversations that spanned almost two years was the expectation ever expressed that EMM or VMBM would merge with Mennonite Mission Network. Indeed, we celebrated what God was able to accomplish through the mission initiatives of Lancaster and Virginia conferences. We also recognized the importance of the relationships and connections within each conference for keeping mission capacity strong.

Mennonite Mission Network is interested in collaboration and relationships of respect and mutuality with EMM and VMBM, and we thank God for the progress we have made in this direction. In this way we will best serve the constituencies we represent and expand the mission capacity of Mennonite Church USA and its congregations.—*Stanley Green, executive director of Mennonite Mission Network*

EMM maximizes local relationships

A recent letter to *The Mennonite* (Readers Say, May 18) raises some good questions regarding the Anabaptist focus of Lancaster Mennonite Conference (LMC) and Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) and our working relationship with the broader Mennonite community. Others have raised questions as well, and we appreciate the opportunity to address them publicly.

Together we heartily affirm and pray for the realization of LMC's vision to become a fellowship of new, revitalized and multiplying congregations; this is a vision that calls for clear identity. By clarifying our values and strengthening our identity, LMC will do a great service to all our congregations and conference agencies, especially to EMM.

Regarding the perception that EMM "refuses to consider merging" with Mennonite Mission Network: It is LMC's belief that by EMM continuing as an agency of LMC with local governance, EMM will maximize continuity of relationships and strength of LMC mission vision and relationships. Never in our frequent conversations with the leadership of Mennonite Mission Network has either agency encouraged the merging of the two organizations. It is through mutual respect and cooperation—not by merging—that both organizations can be most effective at extending God's kingdom.

At both EMM and LMC we strive to understand our faith in Jesus Christ within a Mennonite context. EMM's World Mission Institute is highly respected for presenting an Anabaptist view of missions with speakers from both Mennonite Mission Network and Eastern Mennonite Seminary joining past and present leadership of EMM in training our missionaries. We welcome further dialogue on how we can be, together with Christ, transforming the world.—*L. Keith Weaver, moderator of Lancaster Mennonite Conference, and Richard A. Showalter, president of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

Pitting our past against our future

I disagree with Mennonite Church USA moderator-elect Roy Williams' assertion that ethnic familiarity is the compelling reason white people promote close relations with Mennonite Church Canada ("'Can't Keep Quiet' Charlotte 2005 Theme," April 20). I see substantive reasons to pursue the one denomination-two countries structure that are rooted in the past but not restricted by it. We share common beliefs (Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective) and common pursuits (Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Mennonite Publishing Network). Perhaps most importantly, such a model provides a powerful witness that God's kingdom is not defined by national borders.

Church leaders increasingly pit our past against the future and conclude that only one can be a defining force in our denomination. I don't believe the Mennonite Church will prosper unless we do both: authentically claim our past and envision bold dreams for the future.—*Ardie S. Goering, Albuquerque, N.M.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Three articles and the editorial focus on Father's Day, which will be observed on June 20. Karl Steffy (page 8) cites "an epidemic of 'father hunger,' the longing children have for a close relationship with their father." Steffy says, "It is when men come to know God as Father that their masculinity is humanized." Barbara Esch Shisler describes her father: a man who might have been a preacher had he been chosen by the two lots in which he participated, a husband who remained single for 40 years after his wife's death, and a grandfather who knew he did not know how to play with children (page 12). But some fathers leave destruction in their wake: An anonymous author describes the struggle that continues for her when God seems to be like the abusive and dismissive man who devastated her (page 13). To all of us who are fathers she says, "You still have time to put your faith into practice in your home. You can still tell your children you love them … let your children know they are valuable to you and to God."—*Editors*

Disappointed by new program

I was disappointed to read that Bluffton (Ohio) College will be offering a Master of Business Administration program in August. Does the Mennonite church really need another MBA program in one of its Mennonite colleges?

Eastern Mennonite University already offers an MBA program, and I'm sure they would welcome additional students. Now these institutions will be competing for the same students, just as they are in so many of their other programs. Why couldn't our church colleges get together and decide which school is going to offer which program and then agree not to offer programs that already exist? This could strengthen existing programs by increasing the number of participating students and decreasing the costs involved in offering duplicate programs. This might also make it possible to offer new programs currently not being offered, thereby increasing the overall number of students enrolled in our church schools.—*Ken Martin, Akron, Pa.*

Mission Network board responds

Everett J. Thomas' editorial, "Bottom-Line Questions" (March 2) generated a good deal of interest and response, as financial issues often do. We certainly agree with the basic premise that Mennonite Church USA agencies need to use sound financial practices and report their financial status clearly to their owners. In support of this premise, we offer information we hope will clarify any misconceptions resulting from the editorial and subsequent letters from readers.

1. Regarding the suggestion that members "hold denominational agencies financially accountable": Thomas does not adequately report how this is happening, thus leaving questions in the minds of readers about whether appropriate accountability is being exercised. In the current structures, several levels of checks-and-balances are in place. First, board members elected by Mennonite Church USA delegates and appointed by Executive Board oversee the financial policies and decisions of each agency. Second, each program agency undergoes an independent audit that is reviewed by the Executive Board staff and board members. Third, audited financial statements of program agencies were available at Atlanta 2003 and are available any time upon request. Fourth, agencies publish summary financial statements each year and distribute them to congregations.

2. There is a history of sound management practices in most Mennonite institutions, and the transformation process created the opportunity and encouragement to strengthen those practices. Each board has created a clear statement of purposes and priorities for its organization. Financial adjustments have been made proactively in response to contribution declines. Reserves have been used as needed and replenished with the generous responses of the constituency.

3. The editorial suggested that members look for a "favorable opinion" from an independent audit. In fact, members should look for an "unqualified opinion" that the financial statements accurately represent the financial position of the organization. The auditor's responsibility is not to make a judgment about the financial health of the organization but only to assure that the financial reports fairly present the financial condition.

4. The second measure suggested was to see whether each agency was "ending the year with greater or fewer assets." This is not the best indicator of financial health. First, you want to know whether and how the agency supported the programs represented in its spending plan. Second, you want to know whether contributions and other income was sufficient. Third, you want to know if the agency has sufficient reserves to carry it through the ebb-and-flow of uneven revenue streams. "More assets" or "fewer assets" is significant but falls short of being a useful stopping point.

5. Nonprofit financial statements are often complex, with restricted and nonrestricted assets, a variety of funds and complex notes attached. Many people find it difficult to make an accurate judgment of financial health from these financial statements. Our goal is to present numbers and explanations in summarized form that can be understood by all who want to devote some attention to understanding.

The key to financial health in our program agencies is a relationship of trust with the members. Without trust, there will be no finances or program ministries to manage. *The Mennonite* could serve to expand the trust through providing clarity about how Mennonite Church USA—even though faces and names have changed—is ensuring that structures of accountability are in place.—*Richard Baum, Tesfatsion Dalellew, Roma Eicher, Bill Hochstetler, Loren Horst, Leroy Kauffman, Heidi Regier Kreider, Craig Maven, Alice Ruth Ramseyer, Steve Cheramie Risingsun, Lee Schmucker, Tonya Ramer Wenger*

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. —*Editors*

IN BRIEF

Javanese Church celebrates 150

The 150th anniversary celebration of formation (the first baptism and first Communion service) of the Javanese Mennonite Church (GITJ) took place May 11-16 in Indonesia. The first day's events focused on baptizing 150 new believers from the synod's 96 mature churches. *—Lawrence Yoder*

To drink or drive

- Water needed per day to support 4.7 billion people at the United Nations daily minimum: 2.5 billion gallons.
- Water used per day to irrigate the world's golf courses: 2.5 billion gallons.
- Water used daily by 60,000 villagers in Thailand: 6,500 cubic meters.
- Water used daily by one golf course in Thailand: 6,500 cubic meters.*—World-Watch magazine (quoted in* The Marketplace*)*

Think positive

Some positive developments since 1980:

- The world illiteracy rate has dropped from 53 percent to 20 percent.
- The percentage of people suffering from malnutrition has dropped by more than half, to 20 percent.
- Only 25 percent used to have access to clean water; now, 75 percent have it.
- Global infant mortality has dropped from one in eight to half that proportion.*—Philip Yancey in* Christianity Today

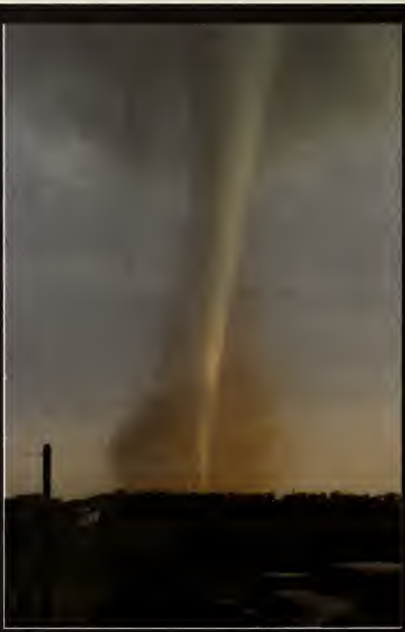
Mejía named MCC Central States director

Mejía

AKRON, Pa.—René Mejía, pastor of Primera Iglesia Menonita (First Mennonite Church), Defiance, Ohio, has been named director of Mennonite Central Committee Central States. Currently treasurer of the MCC Great Lakes board, Mejía will begin his assignment July 1.

A six-member committee from the MCC Central States board selected Mejía, with input from a consultant. The region—one of the four that make up MCC U.S.—has been under the direction of an interim staff leadership team since January.

Originally from San Salvador, El Salvador, Mejía worked as a certified public accountant. In 1997 he graduated from Goshen (Ind.) College in Hispanic Ministries and accounting.*—MCC News Service*



Robert O. Zehr

'The sound like the rush of a violent wind'

At the 100th anniversary celebrations of Crystal Springs (Kan.) Mennonite Church on May 29, participants witnessed this tornado moving toward the church building. Robert Zehr, who served as pastor there during the early 1970s, took this photo and reports that the church's building was not damaged.

Congolese youth hold evangelistic campaign

KINSHASA, Democratic Republic of Congo—Congolese youth have taken action on challenges presented at the Mennonite World Conference Global Youth Summit (GYS) in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, last August. In April they organized a day of praise through music for youth and adults and a three-day evangelistic campaign.

The music day brought together more than 20 choirs. The evangelism event reinforced a sense of community between youth and adults. Future plans include a two-day prayer crusade.

At the GYS, youth agreed they should be in dialogue with church leaders to impress upon them the concern that youth have for God's work. Issues youth raised at the summit included misunderstandings between youth and adults, lack of access by youth in church activities and lack of interest by adults in youth activities.*—Mennonite World Conference, from a report by José Ciakatumba*

Group plans peace center for Washington

HARPERS FERRY, W.V.—Seventeen peacemakers met here April 16-18 to plant a seed they hope will grow into a new peace center in Washington. According to Joe Roos, pastor of Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church and chair of the peace center board: "The mission of the new Anabaptist Peace Center Washington DC (APCWDC) is to engage in education, action and ecumenical cooperation in order to encourage and assist both church and society to put into practices Jesus' call to peace and justice."

Other members of the inaugural board of directors for APCWDC include vice chair Ruth Hoover Zimmerman, secretary-treasurer Marty Shupack, J.R. Burkholder, Lawrence Hart, Susan Mark Landis, Addie Banks, Ed Hall, Pearl Hoover, Sang Jin Choi, David Evans, Marcus Smucker and Jose Ortiz.

APCWDC's work will be multifaceted, engaging in theological reflection on issues of peace and justice, nonviolent action and advocacy on public policy, local service opportunities and work to bring understanding, healing and reconciliation in church and society.*—Keith Swartzendruber*

CPT joins protest migrant deaths on border

TUCSON, Ariz.—Beginning May 28, Christian Peacemaker Teams participated in a weekend of events in the borderlands of Arizona and Mexico sponsored by the organization No More Deaths. CPT has joined the summer movement.

No More Deaths is an effort to reduce the number of deaths of migrants passing through the Sonoran desert. A new militarized border is forcing migrants to travel through some of the most dan-

Portraits of prisoners at Peacebuilding Institute
Allyson Holtz (left) and Howard Zehr discuss her mixed media portraits of inmates on exhibit during the Summer Peacebuilding Institute at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. Holtz teaches art and created the portraits at the State Correctional Institute in Pittsburgh. The viewers at the art opening were her classmates in the "Restorative Justice" workshop at SPI.

gerous parts of the desert, leading to severe dehydration, snakebites and many other ailments. According to some estimates, more than 200 migrants died in Arizona last summer while making the trip north.—*CPT*

Kauffman Museum wins national award

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Kauffman Museum at Bethel College in North Newton received first prize in the American Association of Museums' (AAM) 2004 Museum Publications Design Competition in the supplementary materials category. The prize was awarded to the museum's "K is for Kansas" exhibition materials, which included a brochure, bookmark and two postcards. Less than 3 percent of 950 applicants claimed a first prize.

The AAM competition, which acknowledges excellence in the graphic design of museum publications, is the only national, juried event involving publications produced by museums of all kinds and sizes. Competing institutions were divided into two categories according to their operating budgets.

Bluffton peace conference attracts 175

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Bluffton College hosted 175 participants May 26-28 from 60 schools and denominational agencies in 20 states and two Canadian provinces for the conference "Teaching Peace: Nonviolence and the Liberal Arts Curriculum."

The conference was held on the Bluffton campus for scholars and educators from all disciplines. The Bluffton College Pathways to Mission and Vocation Program sponsored the conference, with funding from the Lilly Endowment.

"We believe that nonviolence has the potential to shape research, teaching and practice in any discipline of the liberal arts curriculum," said J. Denny Weaver, conference co-chair and religion professor at Bluffton. "That is a cutting-edge idea, which means that seeing how nonviolence can shape disciplines across the liberal arts curriculum is not yet a consensus idea or even a commonly accepted idea."—*Bluffton College News Service*

MCC assists farmers starting over in Chad

AKRON, Pa.—The Mont de Lam region of southern Chad has been devastated by years of civil war, during which villages were burned, carts and plows looted and animals destroyed. Unable to survive as farmers, many residents fled into neighboring countries or sought jobs in Chad's oil-producing area. Now Mont de Lam is experiencing relative stability. Through partner organization Operation Joseph, Mennonite Central Committee is supporting a three-year project to help returning refugees and others rebuild their lives as farmers. The project provides intensive training and support to 12 households of eight to 14 people each. It will help farmers organize into local and regional cooperatives to market their crops and will provide small loans for equipment and animals. MCC is providing $15,000 for the first year.—*MCC News Service*

Goshen College photo by Jodi H. Beyeler

Inquiring students check out the ministry
The Ministry Inquiry Program, a joint effort of Mennonite Church USA and the five Mennonite colleges in the United States, enables students from those colleges to test their calling and gifts for ministry by serving as pastoral interns for an 11-week term. Participants this summer from Goshen (Ind.) College include (back row, left to right) Peter Moyer, Rachel Webster, Daniel Love, Joy Houser, (front row, left to right) Sondra Eby, Sarah Rohrer, Will Velez and Matt Troyer.

IN BRIEF

Goshen thinclads all-Americans

Three Goshen (Ind.) College athletes earned all-American status at the 2004 NAIA Track and Field National Championships May 27-29 in Louisville, Ky. Senior Heidi Saunders (Plainwell, Mich.) finished fifth in the 10,000-meter run—the top six in each event earn All-American status—in a time of 38:14.29. Junior Justin Gillette (Niles, Mich.) finished second in the men's marathon in 2:29:44, while junior Melissa Lehman (Berne, Ind.) finished sixth in the women's marathon in 3:14:04.

Global climate change concerns church leaders

Christian and Jewish leaders and Nobel Prize-winning scientists have urged U.S. senators to act on legislation to address global climate change. The two-page statement, titled "Earth's Climate Embraces Us All," speaks of predicted consequences of climate change such as heat waves and floods that could harm human life and be particularly devastating for developing countries.The signatories asked the Senate to move forward with the Climate Stewardship Act, which calls for moderate greenhouse gas reductions and incentives to lower energy costs. *—National Catholic Reporter*

I kneel befo

When men surrender their lives in obedience to the will of their heavenly Father, they become more loving men, better husbands and fathers.

e the Father

Calling God Father is not just a figure of speech drawn from ancient patriarchal societies that may or may not be helpful for today. It is the revelation of God's essential being.

by Karl E. Steffy

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth derives its name.—Ephesians 3:14-15

Our Christian faith reveals God as Father. To call God Father is, strictly speaking, not just an analogy or a metaphor. As Patrick Reardon explains, "The fatherhood of God pertains to his own inner life. He is Father 'prior to' being Creator. ... In calling God Father we are not simply saying that our relationship with God somehow resembles our relationship to our earthly fathers. We are saying, in fact, just the opposite. We are saying that the relationship of earthly fathers to their children may be likened to God's relationship to his eternal Son" (*Touchstone*, Jan/Feb. 2001).

Calling God Father is not just a figure of speech drawn from ancient patriarchal societies that may or may not be helpful for today. It is the revelation of God's essential being.

Many today think that calling God Father promotes male dominance and oppression. If God is Father, then God is male, and since male is oppressive, so is God, the reasoning goes. To the contrary, it is when men come to know God as Father that their masculinity is humanized. When men surrender their lives in obedience to the will of their heavenly Father, they become more loving men, better husbands and fathers.

To be sure, sexism is a sin. Discrimination on the basis of one's gender is sub-Christian. Throughout history, men have been and are guilty of dominating and oppressing women. This is a real problem in our fallen world. But this is the result of rebellion against God our Father, not of submission to him. It is the result of leaving our Father's house and living life our own way. Men need to repent of wrong attitudes and behaviors toward women (and vice-versa). The Scriptures are clear that women and men are fully equal, both created in the image of God. Genesis 1:27 (NIV): "So God created man in his own image, ... male and female he created them." Galatians 3:28 (NIV): "There is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ."

Continued on page 10

Calling God father implies the closest possible intimacy, a safe, caring relationship.

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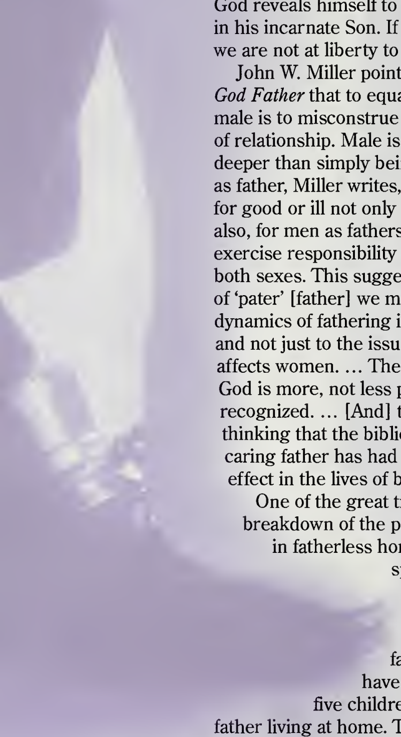

Masculine gender: While God's eternal inner being remains a mystery, we assume God is neither male nor female, per se. Both male and female images are used of God in Scripture. The expression "the Fatherhood of God" then encompasses and transcends maleness and femaleness. However, God reveals himself to us in masculine gender and in his incarnate Son. If we take revelation seriously, we are not at liberty to change this.

John W. Miller points out in his book *Calling God Father* that to equate the word "father" with male is to misconstrue the issue. "Father" is a word of relationship. Male is not. Fatherhood runs much deeper than simply being male. The role of males as father, Miller writes, "is one that has an impact for good or ill not only on females but on males also, for men as fathers, together with their wives, exercise responsibility for the care of children of both sexes. This suggests that for an appreciation of 'pater' [father] we must attend to the complex dynamics of fathering in the nurture of children and not just to the issue of male supremacy as it affects women. ... The biblical representation of God is more, not less patriarchal than generally recognized. ... [And] there are solid reasons for thinking that the biblical representation of God as caring father has had a generally humanizing effect in the lives of both men and women."

One of the great tragedies of our time is the breakdown of the primary family unit resulting in fatherless homes. One psychologist speaks of an epidemic of "father hunger," the longing children have for a close relationship with their father, which many do not have. Approximately two out of five children in America do not have a father living at home. The fatherless can find hope in God, whose name is Yahweh, "a father to the fatherless, a defender of widows" (Psalm 68:5 NIV).

In Ephesians 3:14-15, Paul writes, "I kneel before the Father ['ton patera'] from whom all fatherhood ['pasas patria'] in heaven and on earth derives its name" (my translation). In other words, all human parenting stems from the fact that God is Father. "Fatherhood in heaven"—ultimate reality, the Eternal God, is forever Father, Son and Holy Spirit. At the center of life is self-giving love, the infinite goodness of the Father heart for God. "Fatherhood on earth"—the Greek word "patria" can also be translated "family." The fact that we exist in families derives from the Fatherhood of God. To exist in relationship reflects the being of a personal, Triune God—a relationship of love between Father, Son and Spirit. All fatherhood derives its name from God the Father. Miller is correct in saying "the biblical representation of God is more, not less patriarchal than generally recognized."

For both women and men, it is a most glorious privilege to know God as Father and to be able to call God Father. Many carry wounds inflicted by sinful earthly fathers, fathers who did not reflect the love and care of the heavenly Father. But the healing of such wounds is found, not in rejecting God as Father, but in receiving the love of the perfect Father. Calling God Father implies the closest possible intimacy, a safe, caring relationship.

In Matthew 6:9-10 Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name." The name father is to be held in highest esteem. Jesus assured us that our heavenly Father knows what we need. We can trust him to watch over us and provide for us. "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Applied to the family, this might mean, "Father, may our homes on earth reflect the beauty, purity, joy and intimacy of your home in heaven. May the love that flows within and between you and your son and the Holy Spirit flow in us."

Jesus the Son: Only through the Son is the Father revealed. Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father, except through me" (John 14:6b). We have access to the Father through the Son. The only way to know an intimate relationship with God as Father is through the Son. Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and Animists do not experience intimacy with God as Father because they do not know Jesus the Son. Without the revelation of God the Son, God the Father remains distant, unknowable and fearful. Knowing God as the absolutely good and loving father frees us from fear. As Paul writes: "Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (Romans 8:14ff NIV).

All who receive Jesus have the privilege of becoming children of God and the dignity, honor and joy of calling God Father. We are not left orphans. John writes, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" (1 John 3:1 NIV). Let us bathe in the wonder of calling God Father, no matter how politically incorrect it may seem to some. Let us hallow the name Father. Let us return to the Father's house. Let us kneel before the Father and there find the security and love only he can give. TM

This article was adapted from a sermon preached at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church, Father's Day, June 15, 2003. Karl E. Steffy is pastor there.

He steps into the sky

by Rebecca Rossiter

—for Grandpa Ivan

Montana is shaped by flames
in the summer breath of 1945. You are called
yellowbellied, told to eat at other tables,
your quiet faith suddenly
visible as sickness. Seventy thousand refuse
to fight. Some end up at work camps or
human rats in government labs.

Three hundred are smokejumpers.

Conscientious objectors won't
sour my men, you hear again
and again, right before
you step into the sky, step ironically
from military planes, into the battle between
flame and wood.

So used to farming from sunup till dark, you will
not admit exhaustion—there are landing rolls
to perfect, fire lines to dig. There is land
to be shaped, far away from Midwestern
cornfields. And right before your foot hits air,
and the burning earth rushes up, you can't help
but be reminded

of the way your chest felt when you stole
that first, warm kiss.
Or the way your shoulders shivered
with baptismal water. You

can't help but hear again,

Be still and know. …

Rebecca Rossiter lives in Dalton, Ohio.

A man I called father

A daughter's tribute to an unassuming man

by Barbara Esch Shisler

Jacob D. Esch was a small, quiet man who liked going into a chaotic kitchen and restoring order. When he spoke in sharing time at church, a child stopped all activity to listen. He asked that his body be cremated without embalming to save expense and to simplify burial beside his wife's body in a distant part of the country.

All 29 of his descendants gathered one June morning to dig the grave. The spade scraped against a vault, a happy sound to the weepers—something about the bodies of parents side by side after more than 40 years of separation. He did not remarry. He had a core at his center that nourished his solitude and that even Christmas spent alone did not hurt. "I enjoy thinking about you all gathered with your families around the country," he said.

A 3-year-old works with the Michigan soil. He does not know this great-grandfather and perhaps will not remember this day. But he will see the photographs and hear his father tell about this gentle man with calloused farmer hands who lived 96 years of longing to be God's servant. Twice he was in the lot (to possibly be chosen to be pastor). He was a student of the Bible, a lover of the Mennonite church and might well have served as a preacher, a church leader. But that call did not come, and his service was in the unassuming role of wise words spoken as needed, without fanfare.

He was a student of the Bible, a lover of the Mennonite church and might well have served as a preacher, a church leader. But that call did not come, and his service was in the unassuming role of wise words spoken as needed, without fanfare.

Cartons of books, photo albums, dishes and tools lie under the trees. Not much. Things that could be set naturally on the grass as remembrances chosen by his family. A granddaughter shares the colorful aluminum cups with her cousin; a grandson chooses the folding ruler to use in his workplace; a great-granddaughter claims a little book of vivid temperance tales and reads, to the wonderment of her parents.

His body is contained in a small square box, his things few and simple to divide, his money all gone. What will be carried away by his family and friends?

"He knew who he was; he had self-respect and a strong spirit."

"He said he didn't know how to be a grandfather because he didn't know how to play, but he knew how to listen to children and respect them."

"He loved the earth; he nurtured the ground even when it was only a tiny plot."

"He didn't ask for anything because he didn't feel the need for much."

"His prayer list was long and included Jerusalem as well as his children."

"He struggled all his life to do what was right before a holy God."

Our memories of the human failures fade away. Yes, he hurt us and made us angry sometimes. Sometimes we laughed at his eccentricities. We struggled with how to respect his choices as he aged and still have him cared for. Our prayers were answered with a good death. A finished life. A healing family. How happy he would have been to see us sitting on the grass at the cemetery, the sun on our faces, the birds singing in the trees along the river.

Grief and joy. Peace and pain. And love shining in the spaces among us. TM

Barbara Esch Shisler is a member of Perkasie (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Things I learned from my father

A daughter learns destructive lessons from her father.

by Anonymous

I wept when my father died—not because of who he was but because of who he was not.

Years later I wept again as I drove alone through pouring rain. It was Father's Day, and a voice on the radio plunged me back into my childhood and teenage years. The speaker said, "A girl gets her sense of self-worth from her father."

I learned from my father that women were not capable people. Inane jokes about women drivers intimidated me to the point that I refused to learn to drive until I was in my 30s.

Women spend their days gossiping on the telephone, my father said. My mother was not a gossip, and she and I almost never talked on the telephone. His statement puzzled me.

"Your mother spends money like a drunken sailor," Dad said one day. This was also a strange statement because he had all the money and did not share it with her or with me.

I learned through omitted words that I was not attractive. "Look at your mother," Dad said to me. "I married the most beautiful girl in the community." But he had no compliments for me. I was astonished years later when someone remarked that I looked like my mother. I told the speaker she was mistaken.

I learned that I did not have good judgment. I bought myself a new coat with money I received from my first summer job. I put it on and stood in front of my father. "Well, what do you think? I bought it with my own money," I said.

"I think it's abominable," he said, then grabbed a magazine and opened it—a sign of my dismissal.

I learned that what I had to say had no value. My father used magazines and newspapers to convey this. Once I said to him, "Dad, could I talk to you?" He picked up a newspaper and held it in front of his face until I left the room.

I learned that I was not even worth good food. My father frequented the grocery stores (he would not give my mother money for groceries, presumably because she would spend it "like a drunken sailor") searching for food ready to be thrown out —or on too many occasions had already been thrown out. Often our meat was chicken necks or livers. Once I saw an unusual piece of meat in the freezer and asked my mother what it was. With an embarrassed look, she said it was steak. "Your father gets so meat-hungry," she said. I left home and got married without ever having tasted steak.

I learned that my future was uncertain and pathetic. One day my father looked at my slight body and said, "You have the build of your great-aunt, and one day you will weigh 200 pounds." Another day he told me, "Mark my words, you will end up in a mental hospital one day."

I learned that preachers manipulate their audiences to feed their egos. Yes, my father was a preacher. He told us, "If a preacher can make his audience laugh and then make them cry, he has them in his pocket." I couldn't understand why someone would want to control people with a sermon instead of simply explaining the Scriptures. His statement forever spoiled sermons for me.

I learned that in church we say we have hope, forgiveness, love and a compassionate Christ who will not forsake us or leave us comfortless. I also learned that these truths did not carry over into home life. Throughout the years, I heard my father moaning repeatedly at home, "Oh, it's no use. It's no use." This phrase became my life motto for many years.

Why do I write about my dysfunctional home life 50 years later? Simply to say this: Fathers, you still have time to put your faith into practice in your home. You can still tell your children you love them. Give them a hug, compliment them, tell them you have faith in them. Listen to your children, show respect for everyone, share your money, trust and teach and, above all else, let your children know they are valuable to you and to God. Be aware of the enormous influence you have over your child's development.

Fathers, you still have time to put your faith into practice in your home. You can still tell your children you love them. Give them a hug, compliment them, tell them you have faith in them.

My journey toward wholeness has been painful. Even now, most compliments don't really reach me, and I am fearful of new people. There are days when I am tempted to say, "Oh, what's the use?" And there are still days when God has a newspaper in front of his face when I pray. But by faith I continue to approach God.

The writer's name has been withheld by request.

FA

by Davorin Peterlin

Falling out with a close friend is painful. Yet you can only speak of falling out if there has been a relationship. Where there is no relationship, there is no falling out. That is why falling out with God is not possible for people who do not know God.

Psalm 32 depicts an experience of a severed relationship with God. It contains somber tones and sentiments as it relates a personal failure of the writer. The modern, gossip-prone mind wants to know the juicy particulars of the affair, but the psalm is discrete. Reading between the lines of this public statement yields a disappointing blank. It only recognizes that some action or attitude of the psalmist estranged him from his God.

This main theme of the psalm is spelled out in the first two verses. The fourfold repetition of the term "blessed" underlines the idea of the joyous tranquility of the person whose record is clear before God. Such a person enjoys unbroken fellowship with the One who forgave. In contrast the psalmist underlines the gravity of his situation with four other terms, three of which are transgression, iniquity and deceit. It is hard to differentiate these terms; they simply cover all aspects of willful wrongdoing.

The dreaded and these days despised concept of sin is real for the psalmist.

The psalmist does not talk about sheer omission, mere passive shortcoming, an inadequacy, something arising from circumstances he could do nothing about. Neither is it something that, genetically imprinted, inevitably leads to conflict with other humans or God. Neither does the psalmist offer imaginative rationalizations. He does not even allude to something that by contemporary standards might be pronounced the lesser of two evils. The psalmist had somehow affronted God and thus challenged God's goodness. The dreaded and these days despised concept of sin is real for the psalmist.

If sin, transgression and iniquity are near synonyms, deceit is slightly different. It may point to deceiving God in some way. Perhaps the psalmist assured himself God was not interested in such a trite mistake as the one he had made.

However, the mention of deceit is likely the psalmist's link with the next verse, where the notion of self-deceit emerges. The psalmist suppressed the reality of his act or thought. He covered it up. Perhaps he pondered causes and consequences and possible scenarios.

Psychosomatic problems: Suppressing sin was hard work, and the psalmist suffered. He deluded himself that he could deal with it all by himself. Perhaps he could not sleep or concentrate on work. Verses 3 and 4 depict vividly this inner struggle. His strength was waning. Psalm 22:14-15 gives a naturalistic description of such suffering, though in different circumstances: "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death." Translated in contemporary language, he was having psychosomatic problems. His body vigorously reacted to the miserable state of his mind and soul.

Why did he have to go through this entire struggle at all? Because he realized he had strayed from God and that God wanted him to return to him in repentance so that he could forgive him and restore an ongoing relationship. Verse 5 describes the crucial turnaround in the psalmist's attitude. This first step was to admit to himself that he had been deluding himself about the existence or nature of his sin. The second step was to take positive action, to confess his wrongdoing to God.

This recalls the image of another well-known New Testament person in a similar situation, the Prodigal Son. Sitting in the mud of the pigsty and nibbling at the rotten remnants of his master's meal, he also had to admit to himself that he had

LING out with God

A reflection on Psalm 32

wronged his father and severed their relationship. "He came to his senses," says Luke 15:17, got up and went to his father to ask him for forgiveness.

Another illustration is Jonah in the depths of his misery in the stomach of the big sea animal. After he had defied God's clear direction, he finally cried out to God for salvation: "I called to the Lord out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice" (Jonah 2:2). For the psalmist, confession after a prolonged period of agony was not easy, and forgiveness was not cheap grace. God, abundant in compassion, restored him.

The following invitation, put in the mouth of the psalmist, calls upon all readers and hearers to follow his example. It is urgent; there is no time to waste: "Pray in the time of trouble." Do not wait until the water rises to your throat. The metaphor of the flood carries the same idea: Do not wait until problems accumulate and overflow. Another translation underlines the urgency even more strongly: "Pray while the Lord may be found." Is this a warning that God's patience may run out?

God provides protection indiscriminately and unfailingly to all who call to him in such times of trouble. But God also does much more. He surrounds or encompasses the penitent person with "songs of deliverance," with unspeakable joy. The term "songs" is later used in the exhortation to joyful response in v. 11 and may be translated "shouts," or even "hallelujahs."

Fourfold promise: Yet this exuberance is not the end in itself, let alone The End. No permanent tabernacles are pitched, and the picture does not grow dimmer with harmonious singing of the choir. The voice changes. God replies with the promise of guidance and leadership. God is not content to forgive a particular sin, deliver the believer from anguish of separation and restore their relationship just to leave him or her alone and wait for the next problem to act again. God desires ongoing fellowship. The promise is fourfold: to teach, instruct, counsel and oversee. God does not say he will command or order. He does not impose his will by force. He calls for response, for cooperation. A person can choose not to act on God's instruction, teaching or counsel. Even a believer. Even more so a believer.

To stress the point even further, the psalmist adds an illustration. While those who hear and obey are wise, others who do not are like a stubborn mule or a horse. The only way to control their "uncontrolled hysterical gallop" and lead them where one wants is by force. Is this a suggestion that God may sometimes use methods other than instruction? Perhaps for particularly underachieving Christians?

Psalm 32 invites modern readers to several considerations: First, sin is not limited to unbelievers. Christians also commit sin, which strains their relationship with God. Second, there is no possibility of hiding sin from God. The attempt is only bound to eat up the person inwardly and cause pain. Third, people need to admit their transgressions to themselves and confess them to God. It is never too early to confess. Any time is a good time. God patiently but expectantly looks on his creatures, ready to forgive if a believer comes in a repentant spirit. Finally, God longs for ongoing relationship. The way to experience and enjoy it is through living according to God's will. He provides instruction and guidance, and his people are to follow and act. M

God is not content to forgive a particular sin, deliver the believer from anguish of separation and restore their relationship just to leave him or her alone and wait for the next problem to act again. God desires ongoing fellowship.

Davorin Peterlin is director of the Keston Institute in Oxford, England.

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Unless

by Joe Roos

Unless a grain of wheat falls in the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain.—John 12:24

I have a passion for science fiction. Nelson Steelberg, a fellow SF aficionado, introduced me to *The Long Tomorrow*, written in the mid-1950s by Leigh Brackett. It's the only SF novel either of us know of whose central characters are Mennonites and whose central theme revolves around aspects of Anabaptist theology. The setting of much of the book is southern Pennsylvania in the late 21st century, and it's two generations after the Destruction, as they call it, a global atomic war, which would have occurred in the early 21st century—just about now. The resulting destruction of global infrastructures and repulsion toward technology means millions of people convert to the lifestyle and religious commitment of the only people not greatly effected by the catastrophe—the Amish and Old Mennonites. The New Mennonites, as they come to be called, number in the millions worldwide and are growing. Simplicity of lifestyle, nonviolence and a strong sense of community are at the heart of the New Mennonites, who also control most political structures.

The novel's teenage protagonist, however, feels too constrained by the New Mennonite community, dreams of a world not unlike the past, but without the horrible nuclear potential. Every step on his journey takes him closer to his dream, but time and again he reassesses his goals, re-evaluates the validity of the tradition he has abandoned, peels off the layers of sin in who he is and where he is going and tries to find a redemption that affirms his past but looks toward a better future. Throughout the novel, he keeps dying to himself to find who he truly is before God.

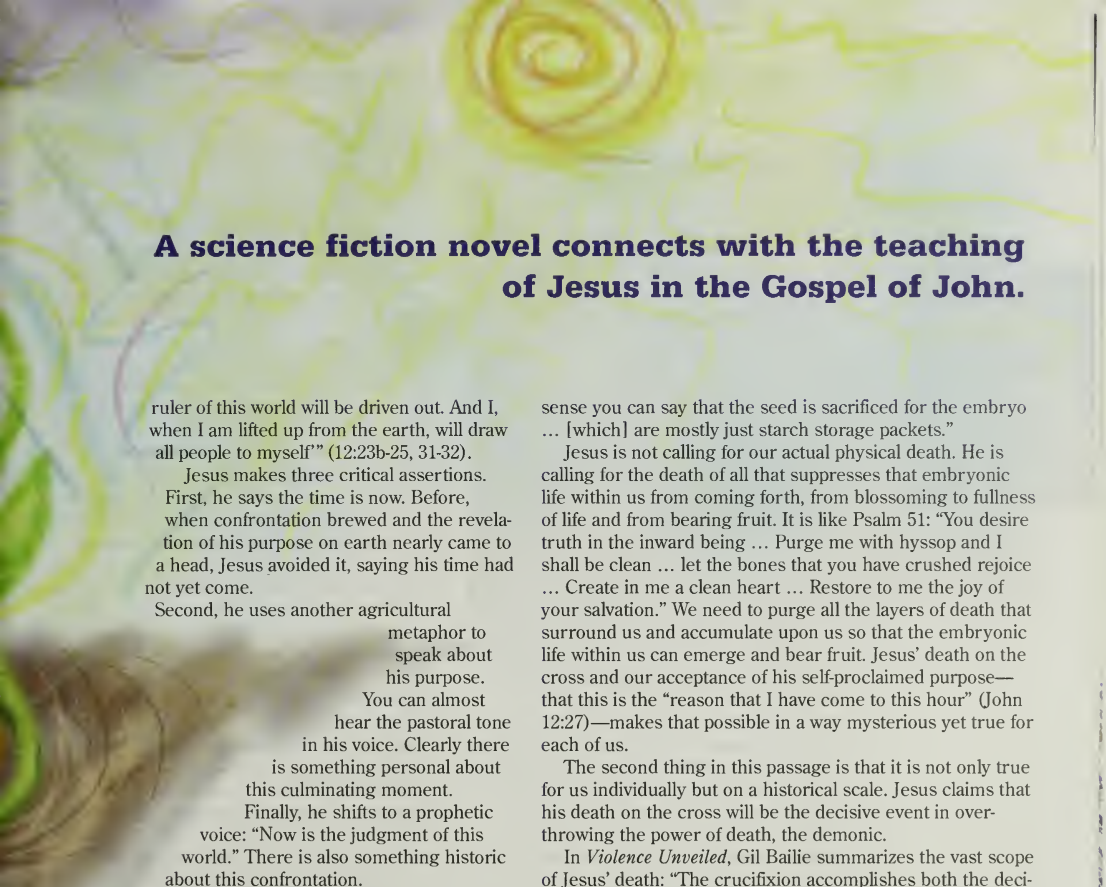
As Jesus and his disciples journey toward Jerusalem for what is to be their last time, tensions between Jesus and nearly everyone are high.

That same message is central to John 12. As Jesus and his disciples journey toward Jerusalem for what is to be their last time, tensions between Jesus and nearly everyone are high. Expectations from the crowds are equally high, especially after he raised Lazarus from the dead. Many expect him to be the anticipated Messiah who will bring sovereignty and prosperity to Israel again (12:9). Others are ready to stone him for blasphemy (10:31-39).

Death: Hearing that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, High Priest Caiaphas and the Pharisees call a special meeting of the council as Jesus nears Jerusalem. Caiaphas brings the gathering to consensus when he condemns Jesus to death: "If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation. … Understand, it is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed" (11:48-50). They put out a contract on not only Jesus' life but Lazarus' as well (12:10). Nonetheless, his popularity leaves them frustrated and they seem to have little hope of killing him anytime soon. The Pharisees said to each other: "You see, you can do nothing. Look, the world has gone after him" (12:19).

Then there are the Romans. Herod Antipas wants to kill him, too, and later Pilate concurs. Historian Paul Johnson puts Jesus' predicament this way: "By the time of his trial and passion, Jesus has succeeded in uniting an improbable, indeed unprecedented, coalition against him: the Roman authorities, the Sadducees, the Pharisees, even Herod Antipas." With the crowds eventually turning against him, Johnson writes, "and in destroying him, this unnatural combination appears to have acted with a great measure of popular support."

Into this context comes an enigmatic but central passage. We are told the Greeks approach Philip, who apparently speaks Greek, and indicate they want to see Jesus. Philip tells Andrew, and they decide to approach Jesus. It is not clear if the Greeks actually meet Jesus, but for some reason their request elicits this response: "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls unto the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it. … Now is the judgment of this world; now the



A science fiction novel connects with the teaching of Jesus in the Gospel of John.

ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself'" (12:23b-25, 31-32).

Jesus makes three critical assertions. First, he says the time is now. Before, when confrontation brewed and the revelation of his purpose on earth nearly came to a head, Jesus avoided it, saying his time had not yet come.

Second, he uses another agricultural metaphor to speak about his purpose. You can almost hear the pastoral tone in his voice. Clearly there is something personal about this culminating moment.

Finally, he shifts to a prophetic voice: "Now is the judgment of this world." There is also something historic about this confrontation.

Two things stand out in these words from Jesus. First, something in our suffering, brokenness and death to self is connected to our healing, our fullness of life and the purpose of Jesus' life and ministry. Dying to self is not a joyous thing to contemplate. A little boy named Mike wrote to God: "Dear God, What is it like when you die? Nobody will tell me. I just want to know. I don't want to do it." He speaks for many of us.

I asked Herb Reed, who has a doctorate in agronomy, about this idea. He wrote back: "As a theological metaphor, I appreciate the notion of the seed dying to give new life to the plant. But from a botanical point of view that is not really what happens. The seed contains an embryo, which is in a resting state but is nevertheless very much alive and stays alive through the germination process and growth of the seedling. The only sense in which there is any death is that much of what we call the seed is actually stored food in the form of starch. ... This stored food is digested by the growing embryo and provides energy for the germination and emergence stages until the seedling is out of the ground enough to capture sunlight through photosynthesis. So in a sense you can say that the seed is sacrificed for the embryo ... [which] are mostly just starch storage packets."

Jesus is not calling for our actual physical death. He is calling for the death of all that suppresses that embryonic life within us from coming forth, from blossoming to fullness of life and from bearing fruit. It is like Psalm 51: "You desire truth in the inward being ... Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean ... let the bones that you have crushed rejoice ... Create in me a clean heart ... Restore to me the joy of your salvation." We need to purge all the layers of death that surround us and accumulate upon us so that the embryonic life within us can emerge and bear fruit. Jesus' death on the cross and our acceptance of his self-proclaimed purpose—that this is the "reason that I have come to this hour" (John 12:27)—makes that possible in a way mysterious yet true for each of us.

The second thing in this passage is that it is not only true for us individually but on a historical scale. Jesus claims that his death on the cross will be the decisive event in overthrowing the power of death, the demonic.

In *Violence Unveiled*, Gil Bailie summarizes the vast scope of Jesus' death: "The crucifixion accomplishes both the decisive demystification of the demonic powers and inaugurates the historical epoch in which these powers—and the social and psychological structures based on them—will undergo a progressive delegitimization, as the Crucified One gradually draws all of humanity to himself." Or as Rudolf Schnakenburg put it in his commentary on John, "The ruler of the world encounters the final rejection, loses his sphere of influence, becomes powerless—over those who look up in faith to the crucified Jesus and let themselves be 'drawn' to him."

Something in our suffering, brokenness and death to self is connected to our healing, our fullness of life and the purpose of Jesus' life and ministry.

This love pursuing us is personal and historical. This love keeps calling us to be drawn closer to him in all his glory, up on the cross. This love keeps calling us to die to ourselves that we might have life and have it abundantly.

Joe Roos is pastor of Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church.

The church needs business entrepreneurs

D. Duane Oswald is moderator of Mennonite Church USA.

For too long the church has viewed successful business entrepreneurs with skepticism. At the same time, business entrepreneurs have felt the church does not want or need them or their gifts and skills in the life of the church. As Mennonite Church USA has experienced transformation, we ask again, What has God called us to do and to be, and how do we give expression to our calling in the life of the church?

God calls us to different vocations—teachers, preachers, farmers, doctors, nurses. God also calls people to business endeavors, to be entrepreneurs, to be business leaders who are creative and willing to take risk. Mennonite Church USA is using the gifts of entrepreneurs in the life of the church. Entrepreneurs have much to offer the church as it seeks to be transformed.

Business entrepreneurs are creative, visionary people not content with the status quo. Instead they seek ways to make things better. They are willing to take personal risks for a broader purpose. They see situations as they could be and not as they are. The dictionary defines an entrepreneur as “the organizer of an economic venture; one who owns and manages a venture usually associated with considerable initiative and risk.” They turn situations into business opportunities. Christian business entrepreneurs desire to integrate their faith with their business philosophies. Here are gifts the entrepreneur can bring the church and help congregations accomplish churchwide priorities?

Creativity: Entrepreneurs look for new ways to meet business and community needs. They identify and sometimes create needs and develop ways to address them. They try to make life better. Can they help a congregation become missional? What ideas do they have in creating vital programs of service to the community that would meet community needs and empower the community in new ways? Can entrepreneurs provide insights into creating financially viable options for ministry?

Innovation: As Mennonite Church USA worked at transformation, we wanted to not simply take the better of our two former organizational structures but create new ways of being church, being missional in every aspect of church life. Can the entrepreneur teach us to think creatively and use technology and innovation to transform the church?

Risk: Entrepreneurs are willing to take risks, accept the rewards or the losses, make life better, provide a better product or meet a community need. They will take risks for what they believe.

Change: Entrepreneurs are not afraid of change and in fact embrace change, not for change’s sake but for the greater good. Entrepreneurs often create change and seek ways to maximize benefit from the change. Too often in the church we resist or fear change and are not flexible to adapt to the changes around us. Churches flourish that are flexible, growth oriented and not afraid of change. They focus on new, expanding and effective areas of ministry rather than traditional ministries that have lost vigor. Entrepreneurs are change agents. They are open, joyful, interested in and connected with other people. They see possibilities and are not fearful. Many of us fear change because it is unknown. Change is threatening because things may get worse. Entrepreneurs can help the church understand and welcome change that will guide the church in becoming missional.

Vision: Entrepreneurs have vision, insight and discernment. They have the ability to see the big picture while visualizing the detail to make it happen. They envision a goal and take the steps necessary to achieve it. Entrepreneurs think outside the box. Can this help the church become missional?

Network: Although entrepreneurs tend to be independent, they also understand the value of networking and the greater capacity to get a job done through a broad network of people and organizations. They identify and use a variety of gifts to achieve their goals. Can they help the church identify and call out tomorrow’s church leaders?

Entrepreneurs also need the church. They need it to hold them accountable, to remind them their gifts come from God. They need to be encouraged to use their gifts to build the kingdom. They need the church to value their gifts and empower them to use them in the missional church. They need the church to provide teaching on integrating biblical concepts and business philosophies.

Our churchwide priorities—to become a missional church, call out leaders and develop global relationships—can be enhanced and expanded if we use the gifts of business entrepreneurs in the church. They will help us think in new ways. They will challenge us to grow together in transforming Mennonite Church USA. TM

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- **Peace and the patriot**—Sarah Gingerich
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Immigrant churches thrive in Europe

Africans from different countries meet, create village life in 'warm' churches

John D. Yoder

Stanley Green (right), executive director of Mennonite Mission Network, greeted the Assemblée Evangélique Le Rocher (Evangelical Church of the Rock), an African immigrant church in Paris, on May 23. The pastor of the church, Emmanuel Botolo, is on the left. Translating is Neal Blough of the Paris Mennonite Center.

The Christian church in Europe is thriving, if you know where to look for it. You won't find it in most of the cathedrals or established denominations. Where you will find growing, vibrant churches in Europe are in the African immigrant communities that dot the continent from Dublin to Marseille.

According to Mennonite Mission Network workers who live in Europe, there are 26 African churches in Dublin, and half the worshipers in London on any given Sunday are black. South Amsterdam, once the most secular part of the city, now has 100 African immigrant churches, and Rotterdam has 89.

If you want to find vital Christianity on the south side of Paris, for example, follow the well-dressed African men in western suits and ties and the women in colorful African dresses out of the subway toward the music coming from a building that looks like a warehouse.

The sign on the outside reads Assemblée Evangélique Le Rocher (Evangelical Church of the Rock). Inside is an important part of the future of Christianity in Europe. Banners on the wall read, "Jesus is Lord," "Jesus, King of Kings" and "Hello, Holy Spirit," proclaiming the loyalties of the believers. At a time when Europeans have become largely secular, there's no lack of faith or commitment here.

The 300 worshippers sing joyfully to the beat of a drum set and keyboard, led by four choirs—children, teens, young adults and older women—strung out across a low stage at one end of the building. They sing in French because members of the congregation come from 15 different countries, mostly from French-speaking Africa.

"These churches are creating a kind of French gospel music," says Neal Blough, Mennonite Mission Network worker with the Paris Mennonite Center, who teaches at Faculté Libre de Théologic Evangélique, an interdenominational seminary of believers churches in Vaux sur Seine (on the northwest side of Paris).

"It's a mixture of charismatic praise songs, some translated from English and with different African influences coming together," Blough said.

The sermon by associate pastor F. Mas Miangu compares their immigrant situation to that of the Israelites in Babylon. Just as Jeremiah exhorted the Israelites to establish roots in their new home, Miangu tells his congregation to "build houses, have families and get jobs so you can contribute to the society where you live."

The current immigration of Africans to Europe results from political unrest and poor economic conditions in some African nations. In a presentation to the consultation held in Paris by Mennonite Mission Network workers and staff May 19-23, Miangu explained some of the cultural and religious dynamics that shape his church.

"Africans find European church too cool," he said, explaining why most Africans don't join French Protestant churches. "African churches are warm. We want to celebrate Jesus as we did in Africa."

In the African church, Miangu sees the African village identity reconstituted, marked by hospitality and solidarity.

"The communities have a village structure," he said. "Africans of different countries and social classes are meeting, a unique process that allows us to go beyond the divisions we saw in Africa. Here we are all equal and can meet each other, and that's where we can integrate into French society."

> Here we are all equal and can meet each other.
> —F. Mas Miangu

Mennonites have had a modest influence on this church through the education of the pastors, Emmanuel Botolo and Miangu. Blough, for example, taught pastor Miangu four semesters of church history and currently teaches him in a seminar on radical reformation history.

Yet he is reluctant to take much credit for this energetic church. "We might contribute in a very small way to something that's happening anyway," Blough said. "To give some Anabaptist-type influence in a church with this enthusiasm is a real privilege."—*John D. Yoder of Mennonite Mission Network News Service*

God's mission among the Iowa cornfields

When the bottom fell out of the hog market, West Union started hog roasts.

We had been praying for 9,000 people … affected by Hurricane Mitch … but I suddenly realized some of our own families were devastated. —David Boshart

Gravel roads are the only way to get to West Union Mennonite Church, tucked among Iowa's cornfields, eight miles from any town. But drifting snow in winter, tire-spinning mud in spring and failing crop prices in fall don't keep anyone away, least of all the Spirit of God.

At a time when many rural congregations inch toward extinction, West Union stays on the growing edge in its community, about 20 miles from Iowa City. The congregation, whose post office is in the village of Parnell, was founded in 1897. Today it includes families that have struggled with the shifting farm economy of recent decades. Still, many of the 220 attendees say they are eagerly searching for new ways to reach out to a community that refuses to be wiped off the map.

What is West Union's secret? David W. Boshart, senior pastor, says the congregation's strengths have often grown out of its weaknesses. Boshart and his wife, Shana, part-time youth minister for Central Plains Mennonite Conference, have often seen failure turned into success since 1996, when they were called to West Union.

Take the 2003 baptism class, for instance, which almost fizzled because of scheduling nightmares. Boshart remembers coming home one night and pouring out his frustration to Shana.

"We couldn't get everyone on the same schedule for classes if our lives depended on it," Boshart says. "I was frustrated because baseball, hunting and shopping seemed to take priority over the nurturing of faith in our young people."

Shana reminded David that all the baptismal candidates were part of a one-on-one mentoring program that the congregation begins for youth in seventh grade and often continues informally into high school. Could these mentor pairs be used within the new members' class?

"The light bulb went on," Boshart recalls, "and I realized we could return to a more ancient practice in the church, which is to provide a 'sponsor' for new baptismal candidates."

What began as a bumbling mess turned out to be a memorable experience of spiritual formation. The process lasted from May through mid-September. In the end, all 11 youth, including the Bosharts' son Aaron, were baptized.

This incident is only one in which West Union discovered pearls of great price within the grit of rural life. With a new missional focus that emerged from work with the Giving Project in the mid-1990s, it keeps programs simple, short-range and oriented toward building relationships.

"We had already broken ground for our new [building] addition when the bottom fell out of the hog market in 2000," David Boshart says. "And even though I had grown up on a farm in Wayland, Iowa, it took me a while to understand how critical this was for farmers because farming had changed so much since I was a kid. But I finally woke up. We had been praying for 9,000 people each Sunday who had been affected by Hurricane Mitch in Honduras, but I suddenly realized some of our own families were devastated."

To respond to the crisis, he visited each hurting farm family and called a prayer vigil at church. The congregation also created a farm ministry committee, which planned a summer hog roast for the community. This event—becoming larger each year—will enjoy its fourth summer in 2004.

The hog roast and other initiatives help West Union affirm rural life at a time when it is not respected and misunderstood. They also help strengthen ties to Irish-Catholic neighbors who, because of the interdependency of farming, have been intertwined with Mennonites for decades.

David Boshart shares the passion for building bridges in the community. The great-grandson of a Catholic-turned-Mennonite who joined West Union, Boshart prays that he will be able to plant seeds of friendship between the two groups.

Besides the hog roast, West Union hosts a Thanksgiving service with the Catholic church and joins the Catholics for a Christmas Eve service.

"Just as I ask the people in my congregation to follow their passion in ministry, I need to do the same. And I am passionate about these ecumenical relationships."—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Martha Yoder, longtime worship chair at West Union Mennonite Church in Parnell, Iowa, shares a children's moment during Sunday morning worship.

Laurie L. Oswald

Mountain boy becomes Mennonite pastor

Cousins from his drinking and feuding clan now becoming part of congregation

Laurie L. Oswald

No one dreamed that a boy from a feuding mountain family would one day become the peace-loving pastor of Shady Pine Mennonite Church. Marlin (Butch) Neil (above, with Freda, his wife) is fond of telling that story, for he was that boy.

In the late 1940s, Shady Pine invited Butch—who belonged to a clan of what he describes as a drinking and feuding people—to vacation Bible school at Shady Pine. Franklin Mennonite Conference started the congregation in 1947 for people in Path Valley. The valley is 30 miles from Chambersburg, Pa., and the conference center.

Today, after 14 years as pastor, Butch is drawing many of those extended family members into the church with the same kind of love he found there as a boy. On any given Sunday morning, Butch may see as many as 14 cousins among the crowd of about 100 members filling the tiny, rustic sanctuary. Only about 10 percent of Shady Pine members are from a traditional Mennonite background.

"Shady Pine began when I was a boy," says Butch, "and the one thing I remember today is how loving people were. They accepted me, an outcast, one of the Neil clan—with families who had 12 kids each—who drank, fought and were a bunch of bullies. But these Mennonites, some of whom wore black hats and white coverings, drew me close and taught me about Jesus."

In what Neil describes as a "miracle," about four years ago, many Neil cousins began to appear at Shady Pine, the very place where an outcast boy became an accepted pastor.

"This Exodus by my relatives into the church started when one of my cousins' little girls got leukemia and died," he says. "Her grandparents became members and then brought other family with them. ... It's strange to stand here and see all my cousins out there. I'm no scholar, but I can tell the story of what Jesus has done. They've known me all their lives, and they'd know if I wasn't telling the truth."

Neil accepted Christ at Pleasant View Mennonite Church in Chambersburg when he was 16. That's where he met his future wife, Freda Martin, the daughter of Harvey and Helen Martin, and where Jesus' peace-loving ways took root. But because of his background, he felt it was his duty to serve in the military. Many of Butch's changes came after he returned home from the Vietnam War.

"I wasn't a conscientious objector when I went to Vietnam, but after the war I became one," he says. "When I got home I had to renounce my involvement. But it was genuine on my part. ... I still grapple with practicing nonviolence, especially since 9/11. But Jesus' life is a powerful example that shapes my own life and what I teach in the pulpit."

They've known me all their lives, and they'd know if I wasn't telling the truth.
—Butch Neil

Willow Hill is near Letterkenny, a U.S. Army base in Chambersburg, where some Shady Pine members work. Two generations of residents within Path Valley have worked there.

"I teach a clear conscientious-objector stance, but I'm also aware that many people depend on employment at Letterkenny to feed their families," he says. "So rather than talk in terms of do's and don'ts, I talk about how because of the fall, we can tend toward hating others rather than loving them. But then I explain that Jesus taught another way."

People in Willow Hill know little about Mennonite Church USA but a lot about how Shady Pine brings feelings of belonging and healing in their broken and hurting lives. For Butch, their ministry has been about sharing God's love at home. For Freda, it's meant learning to relate in a "foreign" land.

"Their faith expression is a lot different [from] that of traditional Mennonite circles," she says, "but it really touches me because of its honesty and realness. Many people here don't reason out their faith; they simply accept Jesus from their heart. Their faith tends to be a really deep and private thing. But once they trust you, they become very open.

"Many women have shared with me about struggling with addictions and being sexually abused. That's why I need training in counseling. ... These women aren't prone to go to a professional counselor, but they will talk to me over a cup of coffee."

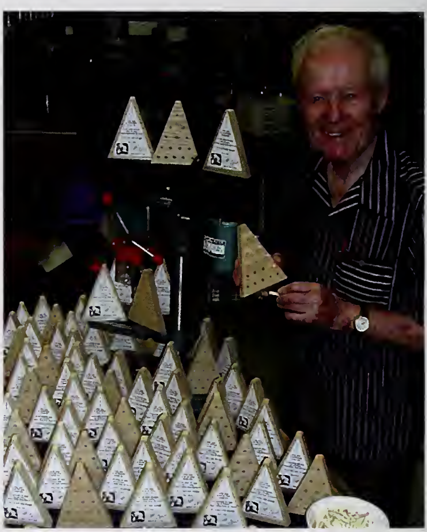
This one-on-one caring tends to be an expression of missional focus for many members of Shady Pine.

"It's really all about friendship," says Butch. "And no matter who comes to Shady Pine, we greet them in the love and acceptance of Jesus even before they get inside the door."—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

'Take my hands,' make games for food

Peter Dyck makes jump-a-peg games to raise money for MCC relief efforts.

> This year, 90,000 people, many of them children, are going to die of starvation.
> —Peter Dyck



Jack Scott

Peter Dyck, surrounded by the jump-a-peg games he crafted to raise funds for Mennonite Central Committee. The back of each board has a message and a picture of the Dycks.

Peter Dyck's many years with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) took him from war-ravaged Europe to South America to Africa and Pennsylvania. Now nearly 90, the well-known speaker and writer is no longer jumping continents, but he's found a new way to help others: jump-a-peg games.

Dyck first made a few of the simple wooden games—the object is to jump and remove pegs on a triangular board until only one remains—in an attempt to make good use of an old board he'd found. At MCC relief sale auctions and fund-raising meals, 10 games have yielded $1,325, and Dyck is now cranking out dozens more.

Dyck quotes a verse from a familiar hymn: "Take my hands and let them move, at the impulse of thy love."

"We have so many people with wonderful imaginations," he says. "Many retired people can't volunteer to go to Africa, but they can do something with their hands."

Dyck's own involvement with MCC began on the receiving end of aid, when MCC food reached his Mennonite community in Russia during the famine of the 1920s. His family later emigrated to Canada. During World War II, Dyck returned to Europe to serve with MCC. He and his wife, Elfrieda Klassen Dyck, assisted thousands of Mennonite refugees fleeing Stalin's reign of terror.

Since his "retirement" more than 20 years ago, Dyck has written six books and has been a frequent speaker at churches, schools and retreats. But Dyck hasn't given up his desire to help others.

He sent several games to MCC in Akron, Pa., suggesting they be sold at the Pennsylvania Relief Sale for $10 each. Instead, MCC staff decided to auction them at the relief sale; one game alone fetched $225. Realizing they had a hit on their hands, MCC asked Dyck to send more games for MCC thrift shops to sell at silent auction. This time, Dyck got serious. He purchased high-quality oak for the boards, lamination paper and a drill press to make the holes in the boards. He's now made some 140 games in all; that is 2,100 holes and 1,960 pegs.

His motivation for all that work comes in part from understanding what it's like to depend on help from others. Dyck was on the brink of starvation when MCC food reached his Russian village.

"I survived," Dyck says. "This year, 90,000 people, many of them children, are going to die of starvation."

But such a dramatic personal story isn't necessary for wanting to help others, he emphasizes.

"Ask the person who paid $225 [for the jump-a-peg game] why he did that. Ask the ladies why they make quilts. ... Ask the people who make the school kits, can meat and go the second mile. Or just read Matthew 25:35-40," he says. "That's why I make jump-a-peg games."—*Rachel Miller Moreland of MCC News Service*

Ryan Beiler

Homeless in the Gaza Strip

Sabreen Atwa al-Faramawey and her family are among thousands of Palestinians who lost their homes during May in Rafah, Gaza Strip. On al-Faramawey's lap is her daughter, Dima Auman al-Faramawey. Mennonite Central Committee is contributing $10,000 toward the distribution of food and other relief supplies to 180 displaced families in the refugee camps of Rafah, southern Gaza Strip.

President's family in Anabaptist church

First lady and children are vital part of Iglesia Raíces Hermanos Menonitas.

Maria Gloria Penayo de Duarte Frutos, first lady of Paraguay, and her five children are a vital part of Iglesia Raíces Hermanos Menonitas (Rooths Mennonite Brethren Church) in Paraguay. The president, Nicanor Duarte Frutos, attends whenever duties of state allow him to do so.

"From our church, we try everything to relate closely to these people so that they do not have to be alone," says Victor Wall, one of the congregation's pastors.

Maria Gloria, a former Roman Catholic, turned to the Mennonite Brethren church through its evangelism efforts. She was among the second group of converts baptized at the Spanish church, founded seven years ago as an expansion of the German-speaking MB church in Asunción. The new church has 163 members, but attendance spikes as high as 600 for special events such as baptisms.

The first lady's baptism followed discipleship training and her expressed commitment to the church and its Anabaptist theology. She is active in all church activities, but especially evangelism, says Victor.

The family's eldest son, 18-year-old José Fernando, is also a baptized member. The four younger children participate regularly in Sunday school and youth activities.

Nicanor Duarte Frutos was installed as president of Paraguay on Aug. 15, 2003. Victor says the president is a believer and identifies strongly with Iglesia Raíces.

"Politically, he pays a price for his commitment to Christ, [but] he shares his faith with his cabinet," adds Victor.

"At our last baptism on Nov. 30, the Secretary General of the Presidency was baptized," Victor says. That baptism made the news in Paraguay, which is 90 percent Catholic.

Mennonite World Conference has received an invitation from MWC-member churches in Paraguay to hold Assembly 15 in that country.

MWC has also received an invitation from the United States to hold Assembly 15 in eastern Pennsylvania. MWC staff are currently doing feasibility studies on both locations and will make a recommendation at the July 28-Aug. 4 executive committee meeting in Strasbourg, France.—*Courier* and *MWC News Service*

Victor Wall

Paraguayan first family: President Nicanor Duarte Frutos and Maria Gloria Penayo de Frutos with their children: Héctor, José Fernando, Betania, Martín, Sanitiago.

Correction: Danisa Ndlovu is vice president of Mennonite World Conference. Nancy Heisey Longacre is MWC's president.

CMU graduates record class

A record class of 69 students from Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, participated in the April 25 graduation ceremony at Portage Avenue Mennonite Brethren Church. Graduates received three- and four-year degrees in arts, church ministries, church music, musical arts and theology. Commencement speaker and poet Jean Janzen of Fresno, Calif., reflected on the student-chosen theme of Jeremiah 6:13-16 with an address entitled "Three Faces for the Journey."—*Canadian Mennonite University News Service*

Peacebuilding institute hears victims

'Many Kenyans fear U.S. anti-terrorist polices,' says Nairobi widow.

As her husband dressed for work the morning of Aug. 7, 1998, Doreen Ruto suggested he change shirts. She found one that matched his suit better. Several days later, that shirt helped her locate his body on the floor of the city morgue in Nairobi, Kenya.

"Beyond the Rubble" was the title that Ruto—a diminutive, lively woman in a lavender dress and head-scarf—gave to the account of grief and healing that she shared at a recent Summer Peacebuilding Institute (SPI) luncheon.

Ruto is a beginning student in the Conflict Transformation Program at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., which brought 170 people from all continents together for the annual institute, May 3-June 15.

Terrorism takes all forms. For me, poverty and starvation are other forms of terrorism.
—Doreen Ruto

Many have powerful stories to tell, SPI co-director Pat Hostetter Martin noted. Ruto, a former secondary school teacher, and her husband, Wilson Mutai—both from rural Nandi families—had moved to Nairobi for careers with the Teachers Service Commission where she still works in teacher training and management.

She was on leave that August morning, at home with the couple's two then-young sons and recovering from a miscarriage two weeks earlier. She heard "a shattering noise" and suspected a transformer had blown. Moments later, her 9-year-old saw the first TV report of the bombing five miles away that targeted the U.S. Embassy and destroyed all but the shell of the commission high-rise where Mutai worked on the fourth floor.

After she returned to work, Ruto and surviving colleagues had to go through bloodstained files littered with glass shards. She found her husband's imprint on a blasted door.

"I asked myself what is it that I had not done. Was it a curse? What did God expect of me?" said Ruto, a Pentecostalist. She read the entire Bible in six months. Additionally, "I wrote a long letter to Wilson because I needed to talk to someone about my pain."

Having finished the 15-page letter, she observed a mourning tradition: "I packed his clothes, put them in a suitcase and apologized to him for evicting him from his house."

As permitted by Nandi custom, Mutai's family of origin insisted on pocketing his entire inheritance, causing a painful estrangement common among Kenyan widows.

She found healing in assisting fellow-mourners, becoming vice chair of a survivors' group. She learned of EMU's conflict resolution programs during a conference with bombing survivors in Oklahoma City. In 2002, she participated in EMU's program for trauma healing. She hopes to obtain her master's degree in conflict transformation degree in 2006 and use the skills gained to help other survivors of terrorism.

Jim Bishop

Doreen Ruto from Nairobi, Kenya, now a student in EMU's Conflict Transformation Program, tells her story at a Summer Peacebuilding Institute luncheon.

"Terrorism takes all forms," she said. "For me, poverty and starvation are other forms of terrorism."

Upon her arrival in the United States, customs officials asked Ruto the purpose of her visit. She replied, "To study peacebuilding."

A U.S. official inquired, "Peacebuilding between whom?" Ruto recalled, "I wanted to say 'between you and me.'"

She said many Kenyans fear U.S. "anti-terrorist" policies will hurt their country.

"We now have 'Are you with us or against us?'" she said. "That continues to drift us apart."

While watching the news of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, Ruto unconsciously searched the crowds for friends' faces. That year in New York, she had given a victim-impact statement at proceedings where four men received life sentences for the Nairobi bombing that killed her husband.

Her testimony was not legally relevant, however, because the men were only tried for the 12 American deaths—not those of more than 200 Africans. Ruto noted that the average compensation for women widowed by the Nairobi bombing was $10,000, compared to the $1.6-million average for World Trade Center families.

Most Kenyans did not want the Nairobi terrorists executed, however. Recalling that Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh went to his death expressing no regret, Ruto said a life sentence allows more time for regret.—*Chris Edwards, a free-lance writer from Harrisonburg, Va.*

Campus stretches around the world

Courses from Amazon to Paris, women's voices to business in Spain

Participating in an excavation in the U.S. Southwest, trekking through Amazon rain forests in South America and snorkeling through coral reefs in the Florida Keys are just a few of the ways Goshen (Ind.) College students spent their class time during May term.

May term, a three-week academic term during which students concentrate on one class, offers unique educational experiences. While some courses are held on campus, off-campus opportunities take students as far away as Paris and Spain to study subjects such as art, history and business.

A group of students who traveled to Paris learned about European historical works and architecture. The Art in France class, taught by professor of art John Blosser, visited major art venues, including the Louvre, Musée d'Orsay and the Pompidou Center. Paris offered a "rich reservoir of art, architecture and cultural engagements," says Blosser.

Business students enjoyed a unique perspective of business concepts in another country. The Business in Spain class traveled to Barcelona with professor of economics Del Good and studied international marketing, the Spanish financial system and how to manage cultural differences in the business world.

Assistant professor of Spanish Dean Rhodes traveled with a group of students to Peru. Titled Lost Empires of Peru, the course included forays into the rain forest and along the Inca Trail, as well as a trip to Machu Picchu, also known as the Lost City of the Incas.

"It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see so much of Peru in such a short time," says Thushan Hemachandra, a senior from Sri Lanka, who especially enjoyed interacting with the local people.

In Colorado, associate professor of history Jan Bender Shetler and students explored methods of learning history aside from traditional, written archival sources. Along with lectures and museum tours, the class studied recently recovered artifacts and participated in their own excavation.

David Johnson

Amazon cruise: Goshen (Ind.) College senior Krista Gautsche, Goshen, sophomore Levi Kropf, Harleysville, Pa., senior Todd Pletcher, Goshen, senior Peter Moyer, Green Lane, Pa., and junior Ben Steininger, Larkspur, Colo., canoe on a river in the Amazon Basin jungle with their guide Victor as part of the May term class Lost Empires of Peru.

"A lot was packed into three weeks and the students found that this kind of intensive experiential learning is a great way to go," says Shetler.

The students found that this kind of intensive experiential learning is a great way to go.—Jan Bender Shetler

Mennonite Women: Voices on Video was a class that took place both on- and off-campus. Students traveled to Los Angeles and New Mexico to videotape interviews with Mennonite women. They then returned to Goshen to edit the tapes and produce a final documentary on Mennonite women of color. Pat McFarlane, associate professor of communication, and Ed Cundiff, instructor of broadcast communication, taught the class.

Several courses were also offered at the college's Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center. In ornithology, students studied the natural history, taxonomy and conservation of birds, and visual and aural identification.

Other biology classes took place in the Florida keys at the college's marine biology laboratory and residential facility. Professor of psychology Duane Kauffman led students through the marine biology classes, where they learned about marine life, seeds, plants and insects of the keys.—*Melanie Histand of Goshen College News Service*

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Mennonite Secondary Education Council

CALENDAR

Ontario Mennonite Bible School and Institution Reunion, Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., Aug. 13-15, 2004. Contact Elsie Kuepfer at 519-653-0296 or grebel.uwaterloo.ca/ombs.

WORKERS

Bixler, Sarah, was licensed April 8 as youth minister at Zion Mennonite Church, Broadway, Va.

Blough, David S., began Jan. 5 as an intern with MCC United Nations Office, New York.

Crossgrove, Kristi, began Jan. 26 as an immigrant assistant advocate, La Jara, Colo.

Hankee, Bruce, was ordained March 14 as pastor of Greenmonte Mennonite Church, Stuarts Draft, Va.

Hoopert, Daniel, was ordained March 27 through Virginia Mennonite Conference. He is currently active without charge.

Miller, Roderick, was licensed and installed May 9 as pastor at Cornerstone Mennonite Fellowship, Plain City, Ohio.

Shirk, Sarah E., began Nov. 1 as a juvenile case coordinator with Victim–Offender Reconciliation Program, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Swartzendruber, Steve, was licensed April 18 as youth minister of Grace Mennonite Fellowship, Harrisonburg, Va.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bergin, Isabel Kathryn, May 16, to Ian and Sarah Weaver Bergin, Hatfield, Pa.

Boling, Kelly Jean, May 12, to Dan and Linda Boling, Elkhart, Ind.

Friend, Kaden Wesley, April 19, to Brian and Kenda Resler Friend, Indianapolis, Ind.

Hamm, Erin Joanne, April 29, to Larry and Teresa Kehler Hamm, Altona, Man.

Hartman, Brady Andrew, May 13, to Monte and Toni Graber Hartman, Elkhart, Ind.

Hochstetler, Abigail Marie, May 7, to Vince and Sheila Bender Hostetler, Goshen, Ind.

Hochstetler, Ella Grace, May 12, to Darin and Kris Swantz Hochstetler, Tiffin, Iowa.

Huebert-Stauffer, Sterling Lincoln, Feb. 19, to Christopher and Miriam Huebert-Stauffer, Canton, Kan.

Julian, Cole Theodonald, April 27, to Mary Julian, Newport, Wa.

Litwiller, Ryan Andrew, May 11, to Ryan and Jaclyn Yasko Litwiller, Hopedale, Ill.

Longenecker, Maria Frances, March 30, to Lynn and Laurie Eshleman Longenecker, Lancaster, Pa.

Marks, Reid Alexander, May 5, to Joel Marks and Marlene Mohr, Elkhart, Ind.

Martin, Alex Chandler, March 5, to Adam Martin and Kim Litton, Newton, Kan.

Morice Brubaker, Nathan Drexel, May 15, to Philip Brubaker and Sarah Morice Brubaker, South Bend, Ind.

Ratzlaff, Tadeo Kitale, May 4, to Jerome and Jessica White Ratzlaff, Lawrence, Kan.

Riddle, Isaiah Matthew, May 14, to Chris and Melody Riddle, Harrisonburg, Va.

Schmidt, Ian Joseph, May 4, to Joe and Carrie Yoder Schmidt, Charlottesville, Va.

Scott-Lind, Logan Shade, May 14, to Jon Scott and Andrea Lind, South Bend, Ind.

Troyer, William George, April 2, to George and Calleen O'Brien Troyer, Mesa, Ariz.

Ulbrich, Joshua Douglas, May 11, to Derrick and Jennifer Litton Ulbrich, Sedgwick, Kan.

Yoder, Colby Scott, April 24, to Todd and Nichole Yoder, Belleville, Pa.

Yoder, Jill Alida, April 11, to Derek and Laurie Miller Yoder, Middle Island, N.Y.

MARRIAGES

Boe/Woelk: Gabe Boe, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, and Joanna Woelk, Coeur d'Alene, March 20 in Newman Lake, Idaho.

Bontrager/Hall: Warren Bontrager, Hutchinson, Kan., and Emilie Hall, Hartville, Ohio, May 8 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Hildebrand/Martens: Karey Hildebrand, Altona, Man., and Andrea Martens, Altona, April 3 at Altona Mennonite Church.

Trissel/Trost: Alison Trissel, Harrisonburg, Va., and Diron Trost, West Liberty, Ohio, May 15 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

DEATHS

Atwood, Nancy Underwood, 55, Lowville, N.Y., died April 17 of a stroke. Parents: Charles and Louise Underwood. Children: Chad, Kimberly; one grandchild. Funeral: April 20 at Lowville Mennonite Church.

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Mennonite Central Committee

Book, Cora Reist Hershey, 95, Ronks, Pa., died April 21. Spouse: Harold K. Book (deceased). Parents: John R. and Adeline Reist Hershey. Children: Roy H., Betty J. Kreider, Helen M. Rutt, Marian A. Groff, Rhoda P. Mast, Miriam F.; 22 grandchildren; 45 great-grandchildren; nine great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 24 at Paradise (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Byler, Anna Hallman, 90, Goshen, Ind., died May 8. Spouse: Frank Byler (deceased). Parents: Eli and Melinda Clemens Hallman. Children: Stanley, Marjory, Dennis, Carol, Mark; 13 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: May 13 at East Goshen Mennonite Church.

Clark, Goldie Hiebert, 68, Newport, Wa., died Feb. 16. Spouse: Robert A. Clark. Parents: Peter D. and Maria M. Abrahams Hiebert. Children: Julie Wood, Shirley Jones, Paul, Robert P.; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 21 at Spring Valley Mennonite Church, Newport.

Gamber, Arthur B., 93, Lancaster, Pa., died May 13. Spouse: Ruth Whisler Gamber. Parents: David S. and Emma Beamsderfer Gamber. Children: Joanne Markley, Emma Jean Fitzmaurice, Geraldine Charles, Darlene Fenstermacher, Dale; 10 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 16 in Lancaster.

Gingerich, Moses S., 80, Goshen, Ind., died May 8. Spouse: Mary Yoder Gingerich. Parents: Samuel and Mattie Yoder Gingerich. Children: Michael, David; seven grandchildren. Funeral: May 11 at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Graber, Milton "Tony", 89, Hesston, Kan., died May 16 of heart failure. Spouse: Alta Kaufman Graber (deceased). Parents: Chris and Mary Stucky Graber. Children: Betty Hartzler, Jerry, Jim; seven grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 18 at First Mennonite of Christian, Moundridge, Kan.

Harder, Helen Falk, 100, Mountain Lake, Minn., died May 20. Spouse: Henry George Harder (deceased). Parents: Peter J. and Helena Goossen Falk. Children: Frances Loewen, Gladys E., Leslie; 16 grandchildren; 36 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: May 22 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake.

Martin, Norman L., 85, Lititz, Pa., died May 13. Spouse: Mary Fisher Martin (deceased). Parents: Amos O. and Annie G. Martin. Children: Randall, Arlen, Donna Dombach, Rosene Hollinger; 10 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 18 at Ephrata (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Miller, Irene Audet, 89, Wooster, Ohio, died May 15. Spouse: Howard Miller (deceased). Parents: Eugene and Lucille Howard Audet. Children: Bill, Karen Workman; 10 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 18 at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville, Ohio.

Mullet, Frank J., 92, Goshen, Ind., died May 9. Spouse: (1st) Maxine Smeltzer Mullet (deceased), (2nd) Esther King Mullet (deceased), (3rd) Mildred Heistand Mullet (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Elizabeth Kauffman Mullet. Children: Betty Ann, Phyllis Shriner, Lela Rohrer, Sanford, John, Philip, Ronald; 12 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 12 at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Myers, Elizabeth Amy Leitner, 84, Columbus, Ohio, died May 23. Spouse: Orval Christian Myers. Parents: Samuel N. and Flavia Ward Leitner. Children: John Delbert, James Leslie, Mary Elizabeth Hartshorn, Joseph Larry, Daniel Owen; eight grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Memorial service: June 5 at Columbus Mennonite Church.

Sauder, Ruth K., 75, Ephrata, Pa., died May 3. Spouse: Amos M. Sauder. Parents: Clayton W. and Lillian Kreider Sauder. Children: Ray L., Richard, Roxanne Martin; 12 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 6 at Ephrata Mennonite Church.

Smith, Florence Edith Heatwole, 86, Harrisonburg, Va., died April 17 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: William Lee Smith (deceased). Parents: Etter and Margaret Weaver Heatwole. Children: Dwan Showalter, Elton, Cleo, Keith, Leroy; nine grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 21 at Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro, Va.

Stoltzfus, Christian L., 84, Elverson, Pa., died May 8. Spouse: Sarah Stoltzfus. Parents: Stephen R. and Lydia Petersheim Stoltzfus. Children; Monroe, John, Martha Thomas, Annie Donaldson, Lydia Stoltzfus, Carl, Stephen, Grace Miller, Calvin; 29 grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 12 at Hopewell Christian Fellowship, Elverson.

Yoder, Lena H., 89, Belleville, Pa., died May 1. Spouse: Avon R. Yoder. Parents: Ezra S. and Katie E. Yoder Hostetler. Memorial service: May 8 in the chapel at Valley View Terrace, Belleville.

Yoder, Mildred, 83, Glendale, Ariz., died May 10 of cancer. Spouse: Aaron "Pete" Yoder (deceased). Parents: Eldon and Maude Hostetler Yoder. Child: Clifford; three grandchildren. Funeral: May 13 at Trinity Mennonite Church, Glendale.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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Freeport Mennonite Church, a rural church with close proximity to Madison, Wis., Rockford, Ill., and Chicago is seeking a full-time lead **pastor.** Position available immediately. Average attendance approximately 90-110. Desire individual with strong preaching, teaching ministry; someone with a vision for growth.

If you feel God's leading to discuss this position with us or can recommend someone else, contact Mike Murray, Search Committee chair, 815-449-2354; jeannettemurray@juno.com.

Living Water Community Christian Fellowship is a dynamic 23-year-old congregation in New Hamburg, Ont. New Hamburg is a growing community 20 minutes from Kitchener-Waterloo. We are looking for a full-time ***pastor*** sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading, seeking to build relationships in our community. We have a contemporary style of worship, a vibrant small group program, an active outreach into our community. Starting date is January 2005. Living Water is part of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. Closing date is June 30. For further information contact Muriel Bechtel, MCEC, Kitchener, Ont.; phone 519-650-3806; fax 519-650-3947; or Living Water Fellowship, 519-662-3300.

South Hutchinson Mennonite Church is expanding its pastoral staff team to meet the needs of a growing congregation. We are seeking persons gifted, trained and/or experienced in one or more of the following areas: ***children's ministries, Christian education and discipleship training, worship ministry, small group ministries and lay leadership development.*** Persons interested should submit credentials to Search Committee, SHMC, 808 S. Poplar, South Hutchinson, KS 67505 or shmcoffice@shmc-online.net.

West Clinton Mennonite Church, located in rural Northwest Ohio seeking full-time ***associate pastor.*** Responsibilities include half-time with youth and young adults. For further information contact Marv Leatherman at 419-335-2221 or leather@bright.net.

Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes (MCCGL) is recruiting for the position of ***assistant director/resource development manager.*** This is a two-year, full-time, salaried position based in Goshen, Ind. This person will broadly be responsible for oversight to the work of peace and justice, resource generation and office responsibilities, and will supervise staff who are involved in those areas. A primary focus for the resource development role will be to connect with constituents sharing resources with the work of MCC. This person will be responsible to meet with constituent churches, organizations and individuals to provide information regarding giving to MCC. Initiative and cross-cultural communication skills are crucial to this role as well as a talent for building information and action coalitions. Fax resumé to 717-859-2171 or email psd@mcc.org or phone Prem Dick or Anna Reimer at 717-859-1151.

Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, in Southwestern Pa., has an opening for ***program coordinator.*** This person reports to and works with the program and guest services director to plan and guide Laurelville-sponsored retreats and events. The program coordinator also directs Elderhostel events, giving primary guidance to this arm of the ministry. Key competencies required are commitment to the Mennonite Church and to Laurelville's mission; ability to lead diverse groups; ability to follow through on details while holding the big picture. Contact Laurelville Executive Director Jerry Troyer, Jerry@laurelville.org or phone 800-839-1021.

"Seeking the Welfare of the City: Public Peace, Justice and Order" a conference sponsored by **Mennonite Central Committee** exploring how Anabaptist peace theology applies in today's world. For those involved where social work, medical professions, education, law and faith meet. Held Aug. 1-4 in Akron, Pa. For more information see www.mcc.org/peacetheology or call 717-859-1151, ext. 210.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks a full-time ***professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible,*** beginning July 1, 2005, to teach in the areas of Hebrew language and exegesis of Old Testament literature and to advise graduate students. Qualifications include a Ph.D. or equivalent in Old Testament or Ancient Near Eastern studies, teaching experience and strong communication and relational skills. Commitment to AMBS's mission and support of its Anabaptist, evangelical and ecumenical vision is important. Mennonites, United Methodists, women and members of underrepresented groups are especially encouraged to apply.

To apply, send a resumé, three references and a letter of application by Oct. 1, 2004, to Dr. Loren Johns, Academic Dean, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517; ljohns@ambs.edu. See a full job description at www.ambs.edu/php/welcome/wel_job_OT_prof.php.

Principal for **Hopi Mission School** beginning August 2004. Current enrollment of 65 students in grades K through 6. Largely volunteer staff. The principal position is salaried, and the setting and situation are suitable for a retired or semiretired person. Previous teaching and/or administrative experience in an elementary school is highly desirable. Major responsibilities include mentoring and supervising teachers, many of whom are young and inexperienced but highly motivated; dealing with curriculum issues; establishing and managing discipline programs and relating to school board of local persons. Housing, utilities and some meals furnished at no cost. Contact school administrator at P.O. Box 39, Kykotsmovi, AZ 86039; email hms@hopimissionschool.org; phone or fax 928-734-2453.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking qualified applicants for the position of ***vice president for advancement.*** This position is responsible for soliciting financial resources with select major donors and provides leadership for the alumni and parent relations, development, and foundation and corporation relations. The position also oversees, directly or indirectly, those persons responsible for seminary development, university church relations and community relations, special projects and the partners in peacebuilding coordinator. The vice president is responsible to initiate a division planning and evaluation cycle; generate constituency and academic program support; be creative in formulating short-term and long-range funding plans and strategy; and provide vision for and cooperate with all EMU marketing efforts. Terminal doctorate or master's degree preferred, baccalaureate degree required with special skills in fund-raising, administration and marketing. Five or more years work experience as a chief development officer for the institution/organization.

For more information visit our Web site at www.emu.edu. Send letter of application, resumé and three references to Human Resources Office, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; fax 540-432-4444. Review of applications will begin immediately. The position will remain open until filled. Persons who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

Quakertown Christian School seeks qualified applicants for the full-time position of ***K-8 principal.*** This individual is responsible for the overall operation of the educational program of QCS, a growing Mennonite preschool through grade 8 ministry serving families from Pennsylvania's Upper Bucks County. Send resumé to Alma Geosits, Administrator, Quakertown Christian School, 50 East Paletown Road, Quakertown, PA 18951; email ajgeosts@quakertownchristian.org

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Send letter of application, curriculum vitae and letters of reference to John Sheriff, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Bethel College, North Newton, KS 67117; email jsheriff@bethelks.edu. Bethel College is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer.

Hinkletown Mennonite School seeks applicants for elementary teaching position. Come be part of supportive and professional Christian school staff in 2004-05 school year. Contact Thomas Burnett, Principal, 272 Wanner Road, Ephrata, PA 17522; 717-354-6705; email tburnett@hms.pvt.k12.pa.us; Web page www.hms.pvt.k12.pa.us.

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School seeks applicants for the following full-time positions:
Director of advancement: This person will provide overall staff leadership in the areas of fund-raising, alumni relations, marketing and communication. A bachelor's degree in education, business or related field is required, with a minimum of five year's experience in one of the above fields, including at least one year's experience in a supervisory capacity.
Physical education instructor.

Send resumé to Elaine A. Moyer, Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446; fax 215-362-2943; email eamoyer@christopherdock.org.

Applications are being received for the position of ***executive director*** at **Cove Valley Youth Camp** near Mercersburg, Pa. This position will be available in July. This person is responsible for the overall operation of the camp, including rentals, promotion, hiring and supervising staff. The executive director works with the program director in managing the summer youth camps and with the caretaker in overseeing the camp facilities. Please send resumé to Del Martin, 1910 Spring View Drive, Chambersburg, PA 17201, or email del@delprint.com. Bring your skills to an organization dedicated to helping people live in harmony with self, other and God, through healing and growth of the whole person.

Oaklawn in Goshen, Ind., currently has the following nursing opportunities available:
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You may download a printable application at our Web site, www.oaklawn.org; mail or fax to Attn: Human Resources, Oaklawn Psychiatric Center, Inc., P.O. Box 809, Goshen, IN 46527; fax 574-537-2698. An equal opportunity employer.

Adriel, Inc., a TFA-certified sponsored agency providing foster care and residential treatment services in West Liberty, Ohio, seeks visionary ***CEO*** with strong financial acumen/operational experience. Minimum candidate requirements are: Christian actively involved in congregation, appreciation of Mennonite-Anabaptist heritage, master's-level education, eight years of senior management experience and strong interpersonal skills.

Send inquiries to Kirk Stiffney, Mennonite Health Services, 234 S. Main St., Suite A, Goshen, IN 46526; fax 574-534-3254; or email kirkstiffney@msn.com.

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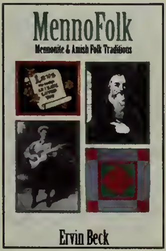

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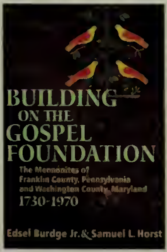
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On the beach (or porch or hammock)

Gordon Houser

Summertime, and the living is easy. Well, maybe not, but perhaps you'll find some time to kick back (wherever you can) and read. Here are some books to consider picking up.

Missional church: Like the term or not, the concept is alive in books and congregations. One of its biggest promoters is the Gospel and Our Culture Network, which is putting out a series of books "to foster the missional encounter of the gospel with North American culture." The latest one, *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*, edited by Lois Y. Barrett (Eerdmans, 2004, $18), looks at congregations that are becoming missional, one of them Boulder (Colo.) Mennonite Church. The seven authors write that a missional church "is shaped by participating in God's mission, which is to set things right in a broken, sinful world, to redeem it and to restore it to what God has always intended for the world."

A more scholarly book, also with multiple authors, is *Beautiful Upon the Mountains: Biblical Essays on Mission, Peace and the Reign of God*, edited by Mary H. Schertz and Ivan Friesen (Institute of Mennonite Studies and Herald Press, 2004, $18). Though "not easy reading," these essays show that "from Genesis to Revelation, mission and peace are inseparable as the vision of God's reign."

More accessible is *Ancient-Future Evangelism: Making Your Church a Faith-Forming Community* by Robert E. Webber (Baker Books, 2004, $14.99), which draws on ancient practices of spiritual formation to help churches today make disciples.

Beyond the Ordinary: Ten Strengths of U.S. Congregations by Cynthia Woolever and Deborah Bruce (Westminster John Knox Press, 2004, $14.95) presents results from the U.S. Congregational Life Survey to show the qualities of strong congregations. Easy to use, it even includes cartoons.

Church helps: Our denomination has come out with some practical resources for congregations, in time for summer use or planning for the fall. *Soul Care: How to Plan and Guide Inspirational Retreats*, edited by Rose Mary Stutzman (Herald Press, 2003, $19.99), uses a variety of writers to cover church leadership, life passages, adventure, special groups, topical and spirituality retreats.

Training Ministry Teams: A Manual for Elders and Deacons by Anne Stuckey (Faith & Life Resources, 2004, $8.99) reflects on Jesus' method of training leaders.

For youth comes *Tent of Meeting: A 25-Day Adventure With God* by Julie Ellison White (Faith & Life Resources, 2004, $7.99, $9.99 for Leader Guide), which creatively helps youth grow spiritually through various Christian disciplines.

John Howard Yoder: Mennonite theologian Yoder, who died in 1997, continues to exert a great influence. A posthumous work, *The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited* (Eerdmans, 2003, $30), collects 10 essays that argue that the split between Jews and Christians "did not have to be." This important book shows the links between the "free church" vision of Christianity and diaspora Judaism.

A Mind Patient and Untamed: Assessing John Howard Yoder's Contributions to Theology, Ethics and Peacemaking, edited by Ben C. Ollenburger and Gayle Gerber Koontz (Cascadia and Herald Press, 2004, $24.95), includes 16 essays mostly by Mennonite scholars who interact with Yoder's views on method, the church, ethics, society, theology and the Bible. Some are more critical than others, but all extend Yoder's thought in helpful ways.

Movies: A plethora of books keep arriving that deal with movies and how to approach them from a Christian perspective. Two recent ones are *Reading the Gospels in the Dark: Portrayals of Jesus in Film* by Richard Walsh (Trinity Press International, 2003, $18) and *Praying the Movies II: More Daily Meditations from Classic Films* by Edward McNulty (Westminster John Knox, 2003, $15.95).

Walsh discusses "Jesus-films," the Gospels and American culture. He uses a variety of films but focuses on five: *Jesus of Montreal*, *Godspell*, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, *King of Kings* and *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. It's on the academic side but is a good resource for discussion groups.

McNulty, a pastor, has written about films for decades. Designed for devotional use by individuals or groups, his book includes Scripture, an introduction, a scene (including where exactly to find it on the video), reflection, questions and a prayer with each of 31 films. It is eminently useful.

Find a beach (or porch or hammock) and settle into a good book this summer. It's cheaper (and more environmentally friendly) than driving. TM

FILMS

Good-bye, Lenin! (R) imagines an East German woman devoted to the Communist Party who has a heart attack and is in a coma when the Berlin Wall comes down. When she wakes up, her son goes to extraordinary lengths to keep alive the fiction that East Germany still exists as a Communist state. The film is funny, touching and eloquent in its depiction of a man creating a political reality out of love for his mother.

VIDEOS

Elephant (R) is a disarmingly beautiful film about a horrible event. While fictitious, it is based loosely on the events at Columbine High School. The camera follows a selection of high school students on a day when many are killed, and two of them are the killers. The film's detached stance, its refusal to make a moral statement, forces viewers to consider "the elephant in the living room," the violence among us that we refuse to confront.

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Everett J. Thomas

Our Father

Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.—Matthew 6:9

When Jesus instructed his disciples how to pray to God, he used the unusually intimate term, "abba." This Aramaic word is one that a child in Jesus' world might have offered as an expression of endearment for his or her father.

We, too, can use intimate father-language in our prayers without it fostering sexism or patriarchy. Furthermore, such language need not be pitted against images of God in the Bible that carry characteristics of mothers. We can nurture in our children an image of God that carries the best of what it means to be a father and a mother.

"The words 'Our Father' are more than a traditional Jewish formula," says the Believers' Church Bible Commentary on Matthew. "Jesus has a special relationship with God as Father and enables his followers to enter into that familial relationship."

But what if a daughter's experience with her father is so awful (page 13) or a son is so wounded that father-language is repulsive? What if patterns of sexism and patriarchy in the church are so oppressive that any identification with God as father is toxic?

We can enter into the same kind of relationship with God that Jesus revealed in his model prayer.

Some parts of the Christian church—especially Roman Catholics who address their priests as "father"—encourage followers to view their pastor or priest as a father-figure representing God as father. But when pastors and priests in this role violate the sacred trust vested in them and abuse their power, followers are devastated.

One response to such devastation in the church has been to work for neutral, inclusive language that excises all references to God as male. Many of these changes in our hymnody and prayers are appropriate: Most male references in such works are not biblical. The original language emerged from a period of the church that was different from our church today.

But replacing father-language that is in the Bible is a different matter. We do not have the freedom to replace an original Aramaic word with another one that may appear to be more helpful to us personally. Doing so would be analogous to saying the Holy City in Revelation 21 is not like heaven because of the fallenness of the cities in our world today.

Christian fathers ought to be as God-like as humanly possible. Rather than removing father-language from our devotional language, we should challenge fathers in our church with the expectations that accompany the privilege.

Even so, there are Christians—both men and women—whose fathers were so abusive that any idea of God as father is repugnant. Most books on male spirituality, for example, are filled with the agonizing of authors who were deeply wounded by their fathers when they were boys. It is the most pervasive theme in the genre.

How do sons who were wounded and daughters who were abused recover any meaningful sense of God as father?

First, imagine God as the father you never had and always wanted. Elements of this ideal can be found in other fathers whose parenting is full of blessing and grace. Second, measure the distance between the father who was wounding or abusive and God. Third, grieve the tragedy that your father created with—or was trapped by—this distance and then forgive him.

My father was the most nurturing, warm and gracious man I have ever known. Although he had few leadership gifts and was seldom given responsibility in congregational life, people liked him and wanted to be around him just to bask in the warm generosity of his spirit. I saw God in the late Leon M. Thomas. Apparently I am one of few men who was never wounded by his father.

Father's Day is June 20. For many, it will be a day to endure; shallow Hallmark sentimentality will help mask abiding pain and anguish. But it can also be a day to focus on our heavenly Father.

We can enter the same kind of relationship with God that Jesus revealed in his model prayer. If it were not possible, Jesus would not have instructed us to pray, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name."—*ejt*

The next issue of *The Mennonite* will be dated July 6, 2004.

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Jesus as citizen

Clarence E. Rempel is a pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

July 4 marks the birthday of the United States of America as a sovereign nation. It is a day to be thankful for the freedoms of worship, education and commerce we enjoy. For those who came as harassed refugees and penniless immigrants, there is a special appreciation for living in a land of civility and opportunity. For Native Americans it may be a day of sadness in remembering treaties broken, lands confiscated and families obliterated. It is a day to ask, What does it mean to be a citizen of an earthly kingdom?

How did Jesus conduct himself as a citizen of Galilee and a frequent resident of Judah? These were territories ruled by puppet governments with local Jewish collaboration subservient to the world superpower of the day, the Roman Empire. Rome appointed resident governors, such as Pilate, who were backed up by an occupying Roman army to enforce Roman law and order and make sure tax monies kept flowing into the Roman treasury.

Jesus' setting in Galilee was not unlike the situation in 1776, when the British were increasing their military forces in the colonies to keep control and keep tax monies flowing to the British Crown.

Jesus respected government in its God-given role of keeping a basic societal order, restricting evil and encouraging good. Jesus' respect for even an oppressive government is most evident when he says to Pilate, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above" (John 19:11 NIV).

Even though the occupying Roman government was oppressive, Jesus never advocated the overthrow of Rome. Though revolutionaries were active in and around Nazareth, Jesus never endorsed their cause. To the contrary, Jesus invited Simon the freedom fighter into the disciple band and taught him, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

Rome and her Jewish collaborators were the enemies. Rome ignored, obstructed and overturned Jewish laws. Rome kept a standing army, taxed people without consent, held trials without due process and plundered Israel's commerce. These are also accusations against the British government made in the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776.

The Pennsylvania Assembly and the Continental Congress appealed to Christians to "contribute liberally in this time of universal calamity to the relief of their distressed brethren in the several colonies and to do all other services to their oppressed country which they can, consistently with their religious principles."

To this appeal Pennsylvania Mennonites and German Baptists responded in a letter read to the Pennsylvania Assembly on Nov. 7, 1775, that they were ready to help those in need or distress, "it being our principle to feed the hungry and to give the thirsty drink; we have dedicated ourselves to serve all men in every thing that can be helpful to the preservation of men's lives, but we find no freedom in giving, or doing, or assisting in any thing by which men's lives are destroyed or hurt."

They went on to say they were willing to pay taxes according to Jesus' command. They were willing to be subject to the governing powers, but they were not at liberty in conscience to take up arms to conquer enemies, but rather to pray to God.

These Christians caught the vision of Jesus as citizens who said to Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight" (John 18:36 NIV).

If anyone had the right to call for the overthrow of a government, Jesus did. But Jesus as citizen recognized that governing powers were often enmeshed in evil and called Pilate to forsake expedience and embrace truth. Nevertheless, even an oppressive government was accorded respect, not because it deserved it but because it had been granted a God-given role in society.

TheMennonite

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Fatherhood of God

Reading Karl Steffy's "I Kneel Before the Father" (June 15) reminded me of a revelation that I had when I lived in Tanzania and read the Bible in Swahili. The Swahili language, like many non-Western languages, uses the same, single word for female and male pronouns. Unlike English, with its "she" and "he," there is no sex-specific pronoun in Swahili. One comparison, although inexact, would be if English used only the pronoun "it" for both females and males.

The English language texts that Steffy chose for his article read differently in my Swahili Bible where, regardless of translator, God is never, ever, referred to as "he." God is God. God is like a mother caring for children. The kingdom of God is like a woman searching for something lost. Refreshing references sprinkled throughout the Bible are not obliterated in my Swahili Bible by the English male pronoun "he." God is God and mother and father.

Perspectives of God vary across the theological spectrum. But let us not use the linguistic peculiarities of English, our "mother" tongue, to construct theological certainties that define God only as "father."—*Mary Hershberger, Columbus, Ohio*

Re the article by Karl Steffy on God as Father. Words are symbols, and the word father—when it refers to me—has but one meaning: me, a balding, too-heavy man of 78 years, father of two, who sits too long at the computer and thinks what some consider foolish thoughts.

The word is too small to say everything there is to know about me. Try the word on God. When used of God, the word "Father," even if capitalized, is too small to convey all truth about God as a source of being, just as "Mother" is too small to convey the truth about God. Steffy diminished the Almighty by trying to cram the attributes of God into one name and insisting that everyone be comfortable with that name for God. Some of God's marvelous attributes are left over for other names and words. Even the word "God" should be used cautiously and only as a symbol for verbal communication. The name has been given idol status. I'm reminded of Meister Echart's line from five centuries ago: "Why dost thou prate of God? Whatever thou sayest of him is untrue."—*Martin W. Lehman, Sarasota, Fla.*

I appreciate the articles in *The Mennonite*. The one by Barbara Esch Shisler ("A Man I Called Father," June 15) is very good. My father was fun to be around, but he was stern as far as obedience. I don't remember that he or my mother said they loved us. But I knew they did. I often think of the days of my youth. When I was rebellious, I knew they were praying for me. My father and mother have been gone a number of years, but the grace of God is still carrying me through. God bless all fathers and mothers; so many children do not have that privilege.—*Carroll Walter, Quakertown, Pa.*

Labyrinths

I came away from "Labyrinths" (June 1) aghast and angered. This article resorted to "experience" as justification and promotion for labyrinths. Cult founders would agree. Furthermore, is it really of any gravity that Middle Age cathedral floors might accommodate "going around in circles" for some spiritual experience? If all the Romish convents for Sisters installed a labyrinth, that's no reason that Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary should have one or that labyrinths be suggested for use in Mennonite Publishing Network's Lenten materials.

Zuercher makes it clear that labyrinths are not from Scripture or from Jesus. If labyrinths did predate the time of Christ, certainly he would have plugged them into all the other life-changing ideas he propounded. Zuercher's article and the Web sites she suggested leave me feeling that the Godhead has shortchanged me. Does God find pleasure when we "pray in the Spirit"? Or does God find pleasure when we dance through some mystic configuration borrowed from the pagans or apostate 12th-century church? If those cited in the article say both, then their answer must stand the test of Scripture that decries admixture. Promoting labyrinths illustrates that postmodern religion is more interested in pragmatism than "thus says the Lord." I prefer not going back to the Middle Ages for my spirituality. Ancient is not the problem; embracing unbiblical spirituality is.

IN THIS ISSUE

Four women of faith are featured in this issue. Two grew up in Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference congregations and, after working in Guatemala for decades, have now returned home to find new ministries in the church. They both bring priceless lessons back to Mennonite Church USA. After interviewing Ladina women in Guatemala City and K'ekchi women in rural areas, Janet M. Breneman describes those women of faith as "unknown earthly saints with their feet on the ground and their hearts close to God" (page 8). Linda Witmer recounts her life among the K'ekchi, including a middle-of-the-night vigil to pray for her neighbors' pigs (page 11). The other two women featured in this issue became Mennonites as adults. Sarah Gingrich shares her struggles with pacifism and the value of learning to view evil people "not with judgment and retribution but with love and compassion" (page 14). Amy Spencer explains what it means to be "an Episcopalian-Lutheran-charismatic-postmodern-Jesus-freak Mennonite" (page 16).—*Editors*

It is not Anabaptist, Christian or spiritually profitable to borrow from a time in religious history when the church was diluted and polluted by unbiblical ritual. I wonder if Martin Luther, John Calvin, Menno Simons and Conrad Grebel ever "let go" via labyrinth?—*Leon R. Shirk, East Earl, Pa.*

I was delighted to find the article on labyrinths as a prayer tool in the June 1 issue. I was recently introduced to the practice and met the Lord in a surprising, mysterious and heart-softening way. Shortly after being introduced to it, we were to develop and lead a prayer time for our youth. We did not have time to mow a labyrinth in the yard or put one on cloth. One of our sponsors came up with the idea of using the sanctuary as a labyrinth.

We started from the center entrance in the rear. The journey in was back and forth through the pews on the left side, the cross in front of the sanctuary became the center point. The return path was back and forth through the pews on the other side. We had guided meditation stations along the way and the only light came from candles. To see the youth not only willing to try it but to really spend time with it and meet the Lord in it was quite inspiring. It did not take much work, is certainly one way to adapt the labyrinth practice to many of our settings and makes the sanctuary in even greater ways a house of prayer where people encounter the Lord.—*Curt Kuhns, Manson, Iowa*

Purpose-driven church

Thank you for the May 18 issue that highlighted purpose-driven churches such as North Clinton Mennonite. As a pastor of a Mennonite church planting that has been intentional about fulfilling its five key purposes of worship, discipleship, fellowship, ministry and mission over the past 17 years, I can attest to the health that it brings when these are kept in balance. However, I was perplexed by the latter part of Tom Kauffman's "Purpose-Driven Mennonites" that highlighted John Howard Yoder's five characteristics of a faithful community in his book *Body Politics*. None of the five characteristics involved being missional. If we are going to be biblically balanced churches, mission has to be front and center among our purposes.—*Dennis Gingerich, Cape Coral, Fla.*

Using anti-Judaism for Christ?

I was extremely uncomfortable with the item from Mennonite Mission Network's news service ("Passion Opens Doors in Middle East," June 1) regarding *The Passion of the Christ* being viewed by Muslims in the Middle East. The article explicitly says that one factor for the popularity of the movie among Arabs is because of Jewish concerns about its portrayal of Jews. Then comes a garbled quote that seems to be saying that God is using anti-Judaism to bring Muslims to Christ: "God is using this film to communicate the gospel and the very opposite spirit that might be motivating people to go see it." To be gleeful that a movie is proselytizing through anti-Semitism is deeply disturbing.
—*Ryan Ahlgrim, Indianapolis, Ind.*

Voting expresses God's voice

Karl McKinney says he will not vote in the 2004 elections (Grace and Truth, May 4). However, I urge all Christians who believe in the way of peace to vote and to vote intelligently for the causes of peace and justice. It is one of the ways we can express God's voice to our leaders in government.

While reflecting recently on the 60th anniversary of the Normandy invasion (D-Day) in World War II, I was struck again with the question, How could Mennonites have been pacifists in the face of such an evil force as Hitler? What should Christians do when there is rampant violence and oppression taking place in the world? One good answer to this question is to vote intelligently.

If you think about how Hitler came to power, you will see it was the result of elections. In those elections, sadly many (most?) of the German religious population voted for him. If the Christians of the prewar period had not voted for Hitler, the second world war may not have been fought. The same thing might be said for today. If enough Christians had openly opposed the war in Iraq, we might not have the death and destruction in that land.
—*Edwin G. Moyer, Quakertown, Pa.*

Bluffton MBA program for working adults

Ken Martin suggests that Bluffton (Ohio) College's development of a Master of Business Administration program indicates a lack of cooperation and collaboration among Mennonite colleges (Readers Say, June 15). The concern Martin raises is based on an incomplete understanding of the nature of Bluffton's MBA program.

Our program, like the MBA program at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., is geared toward working adults who wish to take evening classes. Thus the Bluffton program draws students who live and work within a one-hour commuting distance from Bluffton.

Graduate-level business programs at Bluffton and EMU stay in close touch in terms of program planning and development. The fact that both Bluffton and EMU now offer an MBA program increases the potential for both institutions to work in partnership to develop collaborative programs in the future.—*George Lehman, director, Bluffton Graduate Programs in Business, Bluffton College*

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—*Editors*

IN BRIEF

Salford Mennonite Church expands

On June 6, Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa., held a groundbreaking service for a major building addition to their meetinghouse. The $3.2 million project includes a three-floor addition housing a larger fellowship hall, kitchen and new child-care center offices on the lower level; a new entrance, larger foyer, new nursery, expanded library, and conference area on the main level; and new multipurpose rooms and storage on the second level. One percent of the project goal will help improve or build churches in developing countries through a program administered by Mennonite World Conference.

No to nukes

According to a 2004 Pipa/Knowledge Networks poll, 87 percent of U.S. citizens favor U.S. participation in a treaty banning all nuclear weapons testing. Eighty-four percent think the elimination of nuclear weapons as part of the Non-Proliferation Treaty is a good idea. —*Sojourners*

Gamble and eat

According to Religion News Service, a new survey shows that Christians are more likely to invest in lottery tickets than non-Christians, while non-Christians are twice as likely to fast.—*The Christian Century*

Mennonite Church Vietnam leader arrested

Quang

HO CHI MINH CITY—Nguyen Hong Quang, 45, general secretary of the Mennonite Church in Vietnam, was arrested June 8 by security police in Ho Chi Minh City.

Reports from Vietnam indicate that police, acting on a court order, arrested him when he was working outside near his home. They later searched his home, which is also the meeting place of the church he serves as pastor, taking away church documents and equipment.

This follows the March 2 arrest of four of his associates. who are still being held without formal charges. There are credible reports that the four men arrested earlier were severely beaten. Their families have not been allowed to see them.

Leaders of Mennonite Church Vietnam have requested prayer.—*MWC News Service*

'They're going to kill my daddy!'

COLOMBIA—Two Christian Peacemaker Teams workers heard an 8-year-old girl running toward them scream, "They're going to kill my daddy!" as nine paramilitary members with machine guns entered her family's yard on June 15. The CPTers arrived to see members of the illegal right-wing armed group United Self Defense Forces-Central Bolivar Bloc (AUC-BCB) insulting and threatening to kill the girl's father in front of his family and friends. A guerrilla fighter from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP), whom the paramilitaries had captured a few hours earlier, accused the girl's father of collaborating with that left-wing armed group.

Within minutes of CPT arriving at the property, the paramilitaries left the terrorized family and continued their march downriver. CPTers stayed with the family, praying to God for protection and peace. Everyone present said that if CPT had not been present, the paramilitaries would have killed the man.—*Scott Albrecht and Sandra Rincón for CPT*

Mission Network sends 50 new workers

ELKHART, Ind.—In its first two years, as Mennonite Mission Network faced substantial budget reductions, the mission agency of Mennonite Church USA was able to send 50 new workers on international assignments.

During calendar year 2003, there were 201 workers serving in international locations in assignments of at least a year in length, while 2,287 people served in assignments of less than a year through the Mission Network's service programs, Stanley W. Green, Mission Network executive director, told the Mission Network board of directors in its regular meeting June 5-8.—*Mennonite Mission Network News Service*

New Web site tells stories of Canadian COs

WINNIPEG—The Mennonite Heritage Centre has launched a one-of-a-kind Web site that tells the story of 10,000 Canadians who said no to fighting in World War II and became known as Conscientious Objectors. A majority of them were Mennonites, their decisions influenced by their faith and personal commitment to peace. From 1941 to 1946, they built roads and bridges, fought fires, taught school, mined, logged, farmed, worked in manufacturing and the medical field. By law, most of their earnings were sent to the Red Cross for relief work. Their stand was unpopular, and people vandalized or torched some of their churches. Some objectors spent time in prison because they refused to don a military uniform. At www.alternativeservice.ca is their story through letters, interviews, personal stories, rare photographs, audio recordings, historical documents and archival film clips.—*Mennonite Church Canada News Service*

MCC photo by Matt Lester

Learning ABCs in India

Arshi Ali, 3, practices skills she has learned at a school Mennonite Central Committee helps support in Kolkata (Calcutta).

Jim Bishop

rtraits of prisoners at Peacebuilding Institute

group sings a song of peace as part of a closing ceremony at May 30-June 4 gathering of the Summer Peacebuilding titute at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. een leaders of regional peacebuilding groups gathered for first time. The conference launched a network among exist- institutes in Zambia, Ghana, the Philippines and the United tes and groups planning peacebuilding institutes in the South ific, South Asia and Jamaica.

shen to the ocean by bicycle motion

shen (Ind.) College assistant professor of American Sign nguage Myron Yoder and his son, Justin, train for their 790- le hand-powered bicycle ride from Goshen to a Delaware ach to raise funds for the college's American Sign Language ogram. They began the bike trek they call "Goshen to the ean" June 5 and reached the Atlantic Ocean June 29.

Zac Albrecht

ACC women raise $37,000 for AIDS project

EPHRATA, Pa.—When Flo Harnish proposed that the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) Mennonite Women raise funds for a South African AIDS effort, she realized the need went far beyond past project totals of $1,500 or $2,000.

Over the last year and a half, efforts by ACC, a member of Mennonite Church USA, led to some $37,000 in contributions for the Emthonjeni Project through Mennonite Central Committee.

The project, based just south of Soweto, offers AIDS support groups, home-based care, youth group activities, food parcel distribution and income-generation projects in an area that grapples with high population density, unsanitary conditions and extreme poverty.

Emthonjeni means "fountains of life," and project coordinator Thami Sonile stresses that ACC's gift helps undergird the project's life-giving aims in the face of a deadly disease. "The ACC connection nurtures us, as Christ's hands and feet, enabling us to fulfill our mission as a service of love and support to those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS," he says.—*MCC News Service*

Conference to examine faith in a democracy

HARRISONBURG, Va.—How do Christians in the Believers Church tradition, living in a democracy that is the world's dominant power, understand their witness for God and their relationship to political authority?

This question focuses the theme of a Believers Church Conference to be hosted Sept. 23-25 by Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, and Bridgewater (Va.) College.

The conference will explore "God, Democracy and U.S. Power: Believers Church Perspectives." Other sponsoring bodies include the Baptist Joint Committee, Washington, D.C.; Church of the Brethren Witness/Washington Office and Mennonite Central Committee Washington Office.

For information visit www.emu.edu/churchandpolitics or contact Cindy Smoker at 540-432-4597; churchandpolitics@emu.edu.—*Jim Bishop, EMU News Service*

Hesston conference to look at postmodernism

HESSTON, Kan.—"Faith in the Whirlwind: Living the Gospel in an Emerging Culture," a conference on postmodernism and how the church can be relevant and faithful in this emerging culture, will be held at Hesston College Oct. 29-31. Myron Augsburger—pastor, evangelist and former professor and president at Eastern Mennonite University (Harrisonburg, Va.)—will be the featured speaker.—*Hesston College News Service*

IN BRIEF

Matthews wins aid award

Lawrence Matthews, director of financial aid at Bluffton (Ohio) College, was awarded the James W. White Award by the Ohio Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators May 20. The award is given annually to a member of OASFAA who exemplifies the dedication to students, the aid community and the recipient's local community. Matthews is a 1976 graduate of Bluffton and has worked there for more than 25 years, becoming director of financial aid in 1992. *—Bluffton College News Service*

U.S. human-rights record fuels Islamic terrorists

Amnesty International USA's annual report, released May 26, says the Bush administration's war on terrorism has fueled radicals' rationales for their attacks. Executive director William Schultz said the United States must clean up its human-rights record to avoid being perceived as an anti-Islamic country. "The false idea that the United States is engaged in a crusade against the Islamic world is a critical component of the Islamist nihilists' worldview and spreading this idea is critical to their success," he said.—*The Christian Century*

Women of faith

'Led by God's

Prayers inspire a student and teacher of Scriptures to share Guatemalan faith back home.

by Laurie L. Oswald

Janet hopes these stories about women's persistence and perseverance in near-perpetual prayer habits will inspire people in Mennonite Church USA to value prayer even more in their own lives.

Janet M. Breneman received a doctor of ministry degree shortly after returning home to Landisville, Pa., this spring after three decades of work with the Mennonite Church in Central America. But the diploma isn't what excites her.

Rather it's the prayers of the Guatemalan women in "Guatemalan Women at Prayer," the doctoral dissertation she wrote in 2003-2004, during her last term with Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) at SEMILLA, the Latin American Anabaptist Seminary in Guatemala City.

In Chapter 5 of the dissertation, she shares findings from interviews she conducted with 40 women—Ladina women in Guatemala City and K'ekchi women in the rural areas. She explores why they pray and what previous spiritual roots—including Catholic and Mayan—are still present in their prayers. She also makes connections regarding how Anabaptist values such as a high view of Scripture and discipleship influence the women's piety as they become part of Mennonite communities.

Janet hopes these stories about women's persistence and perseverance in near-perpetual prayer habits will inspire people in Mennonite Church USA to value prayer even more in their own lives, she says.

"During the interviewing, I always felt like I was on holy ground, in the presence of unknown earthly saints with their feet on the ground and their hearts close to God's," Janet says. "I think the text 'pray without ceasing' must mean that throughout Guatemala, as one example, people, especially women, are praying at every hour and place.

hand and gracious love'

Rooted: From right, Janet M. Breneman, who recently graduated from Lancaster (Pa.) Theological Seminary with a doctor of ministry degree, enjoys the graduation celebration May 15 with her niece, Krista Breneman (center), and her mother, Jean Breneman.

"They pray while getting their children off to school, selling their meager wares at market, hoeing their gardens, sitting on the buses or in their beds at night when God wakes them up and they get down on their knees and pray for an hour or so. Prayers are unceasingly ascending to God."

Janet describes prayers from Ladina mothers who want God to protect their children from violence. Janet writes, "Elena … has cried and comforted more than one family whose son lies dead, sprawled in his own blood on the street after a gang fight."

She quotes Elena, a single woman who ministers to many families: "I am always praying that our governing people would do something different one day. I know it is a cry in the desert, but sometimes it must be expressed because one cannot stay silent. Also I pray that one day they might know Jesus because I believe it is the true freedom."

Janet also discusses how Mayan culture influenced the K'ekchi people, who say many prayers regarding their corn crop during hoeing, weeding, planting and harvesting. Part of a planting prayer includes: "Father in heaven, this is our food and our drink, and it is all yours, and we ask now, help it grow, and that nothing would happen to it. … We do not have any power; you have the power, and all is in your hands."

Janet says prayers like these exemplify "how their gratitude for things that seem so small to us tunes their thoughts and reflections to God's great love. This impressed me over and over."

Rooted and replanted: Janet is uncertain how in North America she will best share these stories of God's love or her other Central American experiences. Neither is she certain into what new ministry God will call her. But she knows God brought her home for now to Mennonite Church USA and Lancaster Conference, she says. The conference is where God first rooted her as a child and then

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uprooted her as a young woman and replanted her in Central America for much of the last 30 years.

She grew up in rural, western Lancaster County, Pa., and was baptized at Masonville Mennonite Church, where she still attends. She graduated from Lancaster Mennonite High School and from Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., in home economics education and sociology.

In 1973, she began with EMM in Honduras. She first worked with women in rural Tocoa and then moved to La Ceiba to develop the Mennonite Vocational Institute's home economics department. After the first class graduated, she returned to the United States and studied at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. Following studies, she moved back to Honduras and worked with the Bible Institute either teaching or directing the program. During a second two-year home leave, Janet completed her master of divinity at AMBS.

In 1993, Janet moved to Guatemala and worked at SEMILLA as professor and director of the congregational resources department. She taught SEMILLA courses in all the Central American countries and developed curriculum for Mennonite Bible Institutes. She also codirected the creation and production of the Mennonite children's curriculum for Latin America—"Enséñanos tus caminos" ("Teach us Your Ways")—with Henry and Helen Dueck.

> *We need church leaders and overseas workers that are just as prepared as engineers and scientists. We shouldn't be skimping in preparing for God's work of the kingdom.*
> *—Janet Breneman*

Student and teacher of the Scriptures: Janet's development of curriculum projects and Bible teaching show her passion to share her love of Scripture. The theme of being both student and teacher abound in her ministry. "I love the biblical texts, and I love making [them] come alive for others," Janet says.

"I am always amazed when people say things to me like—as one brother did right before I left Guatemala—'This text from the Psalms is one of your favorites. I remember when you led the reflection on it at a writer's workshop.' … I said, 'Wow, you people have wonderful memories!' He responded, 'You must remember we are an oral culture.'"

Janet knows how much love for God and the Scriptures can inspire others. "During all my growing-up years I heard missionaries speak in our churches and conferences, including missionary women, and they inspired me," she says.

"As a child, I felt called to mission work; it must have been in part because of the many women and men I had contact with. … I remember laying out the EMM missionary prayer pictures on the living room floor, identifying the pictures with the list of names and places they were and praying for them."

Missionary women proved to Janet that women as well as men are invited to join God's work in the world, she says. The Honduras Mennonite Church licensed Janet for ministry, and later Lancaster Conference licensed her for her work with EMM in Central America.

"As a child or young person, I used to read, or hear preached, Genesis 1 as saying that God created man in his image," she says. "It was like the dawn of a new day when I realized that God created man and woman in God's image. It was such relief to me. … Men and women need to work together to live out the image of God in the earth today."

Janet prays that women and men in Mennonite Church USA will become partners with sister churches across the world. "These churches have a lot of gifts, enthusiasm, freshness and insight from still being first- and second-generation Christian Mennonites, often in situations much like biblical times or the 16th-century Anabaptists," she says.

Janet encourages people to ask God for direction, to follow God's leading and to prepare well for the work ahead. "Some of the learning happens on the way, through being led by God's hand and gracious love," she says. "We need church leaders and overseas workers that are just as prepared as engineers and scientists. We shouldn't be skimping in preparing for God's work of the kingdom.

"Other important learning happens in the classroom with professors and scholars, from the wealth of experience that has gone before us and with the original texts in hand so as to glean the deeper meaning of the Scriptures."

Laurie L. Oswald is news service director for Mennonite Church USA.

Friendship: Linda Witmer, right, with her good friend Janet M. Breneman.

Growing up twice

One woman's journey from Lancaster County, Pa., to Central America and back again

by Laurie L. Oswald

Linda Witmer says she's had the privilege of growing up twice: as a child in the hills of Lancaster County, Pa., among Mennonites and as a woman in the mountains of Alta Verpaz, Guatemala, among the Maya, K'ekchi people.

Linda, who came home to Lancaster in April after working 23 years with the K'ekchi Mennonite Church, hopes to share the gifts of faith and friendship this group gave her. Over a 30-year span, Linda served with Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) amid the rapidly growing indigenous church.

What the K'ekchi taught her—a dependence on God in all of life—helped her grow as a woman of faith, she says. Their spirituality intertwined the daily and divine, such as praying that God will protect their pigs and crops, and showed her that nothing lies outside God's loving care.

And they embraced her as a beloved sister in Christ and a

Their spirituality intertwined the daily and divine, such as praying that God will protect their pigs and crops, and showed her that nothing lies outside God's loving care.

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Rich in faith: Linda Witmer with friends in Guatemala

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leader—despite cultural barriers to trusting a single woman to lead, she says. All this and more transformed the young nursing graduate of Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., into a pastoral leader among people she met as strangers and left as family.

"The K'ekchi helped me see the church and Scripture with different eyes," Linda says. "I experienced church from the marginalized people who don't have power but are rich in faith. Many of the leaders here have nothing but a Bible and concordance in K'ekchi, yet the church has grown in the last 30 years from four churches with a handful of people to 95 churches with 8,000 members.

"They have a wealth in their walk with God that is so rich in faith. They don't compartmentalize their prayers and spirituality from the rest of life—a viewpoint shaped by the roots of their Mayan culture that considers spirituality as part of all of life."

Praying for pigs: An example of that perspective came the night that Linda settled into bed about 10 p.m. and received a knock on the door by pastors who attended her women's issues classes. "They asked me to go with them to pray for their pigs," Linda says. "I wasn't thrilled about going to pray for pigs in the middle of the night, but I got up and got dressed and walked with them beneath a full moon about an hour into the rain forest.

"Since I'd never prayed for pigs before, I didn't know what to expect. The pastor read from Genesis 1 and the Psalms, all passages about God creating the animals and the birds and how God cares for them. Then we sang 'How Great Thou Art' and other choruses in K'ekchi."

I experienced church from the marginalized people who don't have power but are rich in faith.—Linda Witmer

In Lancaster County, praying for livestock seems comical, but the practice is common among the K'ekchi, Linda says. "We spent a long time asking God to protect those pigs from predators," she says. "Most people there don't even have one pig, and so they were grateful to have five, because their very survival depended on them."

Old terrain, new vistas: Now that Linda is back in Pennsylvania, she carries within her the new vistas the K'ekchi gave her during such prayer meetings, she says. Only time will reveal where God will lead her through old terrain that she'll now walk in new ways. For starters, she's enrolled for the fall semester at Lancaster Theological Seminary. That's where she hopes to write—based on a request from the K'ekchi church leaders—a history of the K'ekchi Mennonite Church and faith stories of its members.

Linda is part of that history. For her first 10 years with the K'ekchi, she trained village health workers, midwives and dental workers. After two terms with EMM and one term with MCC, Linda returned to the United States in 1985, after which she received a master's degree in public health from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. Until 1991, she also worked in eastern Pennsylvania as a public health nurse, studied at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., and taught public health nursing at Goshen (Ind.) College.

In 1991, EMM, MCC and the national K'ekchi Mennonite Church asked Linda to return to Guatemala to do a participatory evaluation of the church and its programs. She took a leave of absence from Goshen. But about three months into the evaluation, she resigned her position and remained in Guatemala until this April. That's when

We have a lot to learn from our brothers and sisters in the South.—Linda Witmer

she completed her last term as team leader for the MCC/EMM Alta Verpaz team of mission workers and as program coordinator for the K'ekchi Mennonite Church and its development programs.

Before she left, Linda turned the role of program coordinator over to a K'ekchi Mennonite leader. "My goal was to get the K'ekchis into administrative roles and to direct their own programs rather than have outsiders do the work," she says.

A visionary, Linda loves to start new ventures and did so often in Guatemala. She worked beside K'ekchi leaders to initiate programs that helped them develop vocational and church leadership skills. Her latest start-up was Threads of Hope, a co-op in which about 30 K'ekchi women weave and sell their native cloth to help support their families.

Two other initiatives were the Bezaleel Education Center, a boarding school for K'ekchi middle-schoolers, and a project that helps landless K'ekchi families to become landowners.

Gifts given, gifts received: Linda helped the K'ekchi make some of their dreams a reality and develop their gifts. But they also helped her mature and develop—especially as a pastoral leader, she says. It's a role she hadn't sought but they called forth within her. When asked to do baptisms, weddings and sermons, she did them as a role model in promoting women in ministry among the K'ekchi. Despite her not being licensed, they welcomed her.

"The K'ekchi leadership may have been open to me as a woman in leadership because there were not long-term missionary men," Linda says. "But I tend to think it was the relationship of trust that developed over the years. ... Length of time with the K'ekchi means a great deal, and I think it was my commitment to them over the years that was key to honoring me in that way. It didn't matter whether I was male or female."

Linda also has a long-standing relationship with Lancaster Conference and hopes she can use her leadership gifts there as well. "I never aspired for church leadership, [neither] did I ever dream of preaching, leadership development and pastoral care," she says. "But now that I have experienced the joy and fulfillment of this type of ministry, I can't imagine not being involved in the church in some way. I love my work."

Linda believes in her conference and Mennonite Church USA and supports the denomination's priorities—being missional, developing leaders and relating globally. "We have a lot to learn from our brothers and sisters in the South," she says. These very priorities prepared her to leave her first family of faith in the North—where she grew up at Erisman Mennonite Church in Manheim, Pa.,—to be rooted in another in the South. Now she's circling back to share the gifts she received.

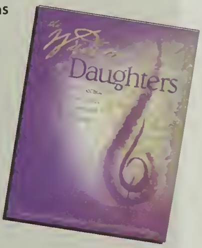
"A month before I left, my 80-year-old parents, Stanley and Ethel Witmer, came to visit me," Linda says. "Many K'ekchi church leaders gave a lot of speeches, and many tears were shed. They thanked my parents for sharing me with them and told them I had become a sister to them and that I had grown up there.

"The K'ekchi leaders said, 'We love Linda and we want her to stay.' My parents said, 'We love Linda, too, and we would like her to come home.' ... It's my desire, whether there or here, to honor the K'ekchi people and give back some of what they've given me."

Laurie L. Oswald is news service director for Mennonite Church USA.

Celebrating Christian women's voices

Daughters of Sarah was an important magazine for many Christian women during its 20-year existence, which ended in 1996. The Wisdom of Daughters: Two Decades of the Voice of Christian Feminism, edited by Reta Halteman Finger and Kari Sandhaas (Innisfree Press, 2001, $17.95), highlights those two decades with this collection of selections from the magazine.



The selections, which include prose and some poetry, come under 10 themes: women in Scripture; God as She; women (and men) in ministry; women, theology and religion; "Our Bodies, Ourselves"; women and abuse; women, love and family; women and human rights; women, society and social justice; herstory.

In her introduction, Finger notes that *Daughters of Sarah* stopped publication for financial reasons. She writes: "Today in many Christian circles, feminism is viewed either as passé or as a dirty word. Yet many gains have been made, and the very fact that women's roles are debated in conservative contexts testifies to the impact of feminism throughout the culture and the church at large."

Co-editor Sandhaas writes about the importance of "hearing to speech," listening to women and giving them a voice. She writes that she "heard women awakening to their own strengths, talents and dignity."

Former readers and those unfamiliar with the magazine (including men) will find much to learn from in these pages.—*Gordon Houser*

Women of faith

Peace and the patriot

How a woman from a military family became a pacifist

by Sarah Gingrich

Any lofty ideas about nonviolence seemed empty, even offensive, in light of World War II. The haunting images of concentration camps and mass graves were too real to be ignored.

Until a few years ago I had never heard of Mennonites. When I met Dustin, a Mennonite boy from Lancaster County, Pa., at Bible college, he seemed pretty normal. As the fish that fell in love with the bird wondered, Where shall we live? so we wondered, Where shall we go to church?

I was raised in the Lutheran church and after high school attended an Evangelical Free church. Our sanctuaries had flags (as did our bumpers and front yards), our pastor was a military man, and our young men (and occasionally women) were sent off to boot camp with prayers and potlucks. Thus there was some theological friction between my new husband and me.

Nonresistance was one area where we were not "like-minded." Though I could readily concede that war was awful and that every effort for peace should be made, I also saw its necessity. Any lofty ideas about nonviolence seemed empty, even offensive, in light of World War II. The haunting images of concentration camps and mass graves were too real to be ignored.

In anger I argued whether it was doing harm or good to let a mad man exterminate thousands upon thousands of men, women and children. I harbored resentment in my heart that anyone would look down on those who had risked and even lost their lives to bring down the Nazi regime.

This area of contention was also terribly personal for me. My brother serves in the National Guard, as does my brother-in-law. My great uncle was a prisoner of war, tortured in a Japanese camp. My cousin was stationed in Baghdad. My family is steeped in military history and saturated with national pride.

To me, pacifists were terribly ungrateful. They enjoyed the freedoms blood had bought but looked down on those who had sacrificed to give them those freedoms. It reminded me of how the Amish pay "Englishers" to drive them around. In essence it says, You are doing something I consider sin, but I will enjoy the ride and keep my hands clean. It would take a small miracle to change my point of view—or in this case a small book.

I read *Lest Innocent Blood be Shed* by Philip Hallie, which, much to my chagrin, challenged my carefully constructed theological arguments. The book tells the true story of a small village in France during the Nazi occupation where a pastor named Andre Trocmé organized a nonviolent resistance in order to save the lives of many. I was captivated by his love, for it was not only for the scared and desperate Jews who came to him for help but for the Nazis themselves. This was revolutionary for me.

> *This book gave me the ability to tear my eyes away from the victims and look at those who brutalize them.*

Hallie writes: "Trocmé believed that beneath and pervading the personal qualities, the moral strengths and weaknesses of a human being, there is something immensely valuable, something beyond all price. If that human being is saved by God, or if that human being is saved from harm at the hands of other human beings, he is saved not because he is good; he is saved in both cases because he is a being whose importance God has shown us by sending Jesus to help us. And because of this valuable something that is beneath and pervades our personal qualities, a person is not to be killed because he is wrong or because he is evil. For Trocmé, every person—Jew and non-Jew, German and non-German—had a spiritual diamond at the center of his vitality, a hard, clear, pricelessly valuable source that God cherishes."

As I read, echoes of Scripture passages came to mind. Love your enemies. Bless those who persecute you. Turn the other cheek.

This book gave me a precious gift. It gave me the ability to tear my eyes away from the victims and look at those who brutalize them, to look not with judgment and retribution but with love and compassion. This is Christ-like love.

Often a pause occurs after a great truth has been revealed. What follows that pause shapes who we are and who we will become. We can choose to ignore it, suppress it, deny it. Or we can choose to embrace it with all our being, aware of and accepting the mess it can make.

My decision to become a pacifist was not an easy one. Already my change of heart has caused friction in relationships with family and friends. But I believe we are responsible for the truth we are given. Were all my questions answered? No. My questions simply became irrelevant.

It is hard, but Jesus never misled us into thinking that standing for the truth would be an easy task. Great truth is worth great risk. May we be faithful to the truth revealed to us.

Sarah Gingrich is a member of Landisville (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

The fallowing

by Jeanne Lohmann

My inner lands are overgrazed,
the pasture grass is gone.
Spirit's wind across my fields
blows rising dust along.

I'll send my animals to feed
in wilder fields than these.
The land needs rest in quiet ways
that nourish mysteries.

Is there a way to know how long
the fallow time must be?
This plow that cuts and turns my dust
is painful husbandry.

Jeanne Lohmann lives in Olympia, Wash.

Women of faith

Why I became a Mennonite

A renewing glimpse of God and the church

by Amy Spencer

As I thought about writing this, I became concerned. First, because I'm a poet. How can one who believes things are best communicated in few words possibly write anything more than 1,000 words?

Second, I wondered, What is a Mennonite anyway? As I looked across the broad spectrum of my Mennonite friends, running the gamut from conservative to liberal—not to mention what I've learned of the international Mennonite church—is there anything we all define ourselves by? The closest I've come to a definition of a Mennonite is this: one who belongs to a committee to explore what it means to be a Mennonite.

You need to understand my background. Over my brief 40 years I've been an Episcopalian, a born-again Baptist, a Lutheran, a Presbyterian, a charismatic, a missionary to Africa, a campus minister, a doubter, a woman of faith, a fundamentalist, a postmodernist. I've seen and been through a lot, including religious abuse (and, to my regret, I've been a religious abuser myself).

In my wanderings through this walk of faith, I have come to realize that the primary task God has given me is to let him love me and allow him to use me to welcome others into a faith relationship with Jesus—to help others know his incredible love for them.

As a new Mennonite, I settled in, taking great delight in learning all I could, including studying the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective and learning Anabaptist history. Over my four-plus years as a Mennonite, I've even taken some seminary courses, led an area conference committee and done some preaching for several congregations. Through it all, I've learned to appreciate Anabaptism all the more.

Here is a brief list of reasons I became a Mennonite:

The closest I've come to a definition of a Mennonite is this: one who belongs to a committee to explore what it means to be a Mennonite.

- Because we take seriously the suffering of people next door as well as in other parts of the world, and we challenge each other to allow our brotherhood with others to affect our walk with God and our decisions about how we live our lives day to day.
- Because my church doesn't wave a flag or take sides, but our allegiance is to Jesus. (This is truly a jewel more precious than diamonds to me in these days full of violence in word and in deed.)
- Because I am encouraged to “think outside that square thing,” to ask the hard questions regarding my lifestyle as a follower of Jesus, my calling and my place in the world. And because I am encouraged also to work and pray for a better Mennonite church, to not just accept the status quo.
- Because our predecessors, the early Anabaptists, were radical. The idea of giving your life for God, even to death if necessary, motivates me. (Call me crazy and I won't care, because I am.)
- Because Mennonite Church USA is seeking to become a more missional church—not out of compulsion but out of passion for God.
- Because the church challenges me to discover what it means to be in the world but not of it. For me, that means evaluating my actions, my spending and my lifestyle not by what I see around me but by what I understand to be Jesus' desires for us as I explore Scripture. And for me that includes his desire for me to be free from the stranglehold of stinginess, free from the fear of harm, free to be forgiven and fully what he has made me to be.

Finally, we get to the key reason I'm a Mennonite: Mennonites have changed the way I view and interpret the Bible, which has saved me from a faithless oblivion.

Through the long evangelical and charismatic fundamentalist season of my life I was taught a “noninterpretation” of the Bible: the motto being, God said it, I believe it, that settles it. While I certainly believe in obedience to God, my fundamentalist ways basically said, You do everything Scripture tells you just as you see it there. This only made sense as long as I kept my brain in neutral (which I did for too long). Besides being emotionally damaging, this didn't work in real life. How could I, a victim of childhood abuse, trust and believe in a God with two faces: one peacemaking, one violent? How could I live my life by this gospel if it didn't make any sense?

Then I wondered if the Bible was perhaps a big pile of nothing—or at least too confusing to understand. Then I got mad—at myself, at God, at everything. Finally, I seriously considered that maybe God wasn't truly the “one God” I thought he was, and all my faith and prayer and work (and even the many times I'd poured out of my heart to him) had been just a weird religious fantasy.

As I pull my head out of this fundamentalist sand, I'm seeing Jesus—and all the Bible—in a new way. I am learning to interpret Scripture through Jesus' life and teaching. And it is reviving me. God is no longer two-faced. This style of interpretation is revolutionary to many non-Anabaptists and non-Mennonites. At least it blows my mind as an Episcopalian-Lutheran-charismatic-postmodern-Jesus-freak Mennonite.

God has been with me in my darkest moments and is with me in my brightest joys. And he wants to transform me daily into his living, breathing disciple.—Amy Spencer

In a nutshell, after my long period of wandering in the wilderness, Mennonites have helped me know God in new ways and come around to where I can honestly say (without flinching), God is the almighty Peacemaker who is with me. He has been with me in my darkest moments. And he is with me in my brightest joys. And he wants to transform me daily into his living, breathing disciple. Thanks, all you Mennonites, for setting me back on the path of loving, enjoying and seeking to know this Mystery who is our God. And thank you, Jesus.

Amy Spencer is a member of First Mennonite Church, Iowa City, Iowa.

On being responsible

Howard L. Brenneman is president of MMA.

> *A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him and went away leaving him half dead. … But a Samaritan, while traveling, came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds.*—Luke 10:30, 33-34a

An act of compassion, of service to others, is a powerful—and often difficult—thing. As the familiar parable of the Good Samaritan reminds us, we are called to risk getting involved to further God's vision for our world. The quest to understand what it means to be a disciple amid the realities of everyday life has been under way since the early church and has played no small part in the Anabaptist faith tradition.

At MMA, from time to time, we are asked how we are "socially responsible," from an Anabaptist-Christian perspective, in our investing of funds. The short answer is "responsibility means choosing investments as carefully as possible but also accepting the call to get involved." The full answer is more complex.

Being responsible means understanding the broad charge from the church. MMA is called to represent a broad range of values of a diverse group of Anabaptist families and institutions. Thus, MMA seeks to avoid companies whose activities run contrary to the shared values of our constituency, such as producers of alcohol, tobacco, pornography and abortion products.

Shared values: Our interest in upholding shared values is integrated with MMA's charge to offer diversified investments that provide for the financial well-being of families and institutions. These products include index and "value-style" funds that, by definition, require holding a wide range of companies and industries. Yet even with this challenge, we attempt to avoid companies who are among the worst social performers in their industry and who have demonstrated an unwillingness to engage with shareholders about issues of concern.

Being responsible means assessing the whole picture of a company's record. No company, as no person, is perfect. Past transgressions, problem areas or bad press don't necessarily reveal a company's overall track record. MMA's Stewardship Investing Guidelines seek to use core Anabaptist values not as a litmus test but to help us focus on companies that can better move the world toward kingdom values.

Being responsible means understanding the church's potential transforming role by risking involvement in the world's economic system. Institutional religious investors, like MMA, play an important role in working with corporations to move toward greater responsibility. As long-term investors, religious institutions continuously engage companies on significant topics of concern. While these efforts take time (often three to five years) and most happen quietly, the successful track record of shareholder advocacy is proven. Recent examples include

- the ending of predatory lending practices at most major banks;
- the recognition of global warming concerns at dozens of corporations;
- the adoption of corporate programs to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Community: Being responsible means working in community. MMA works closely with groups such as the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (national ecumenical leader in shareholder advocacy) to apply faith-driven values to investing. These partnerships extend our reach to dozens of corporations every year.

Being responsible means acting as the Good Samaritan by focusing on those often forgotten by mainstream economic institutions. To further respond to Christ's call to engage the world, MMA has sought to take our commitment a step further. MMA Praxis is one of only nine socially responsible mutual funds to commit more than 1 percent of fund assets to community development investments, such as low-income housing, small businesses and community-improvement projects.

In the end, individuals must determine what best reflects stewardship investing for them. At MMA, we seek to serve our constituency as faithfully as we can. As the Good Samaritan, we hope our investment portfolios reflect God's call to risk getting involved in pursuing kingdom values.

Note: In the June 1 issue of *The Mennonite*, questions were raised about specific companies in which MMA invests. Find MMA's perspective on those companies attached to this article in the Further Reading section of www.mmapraxis.com.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Secondary terrorism**—Dorothy Nickel Friesen
- **A conference grieves its losses**—Melanie Zuercher
- **Seeking countercultural worship**—Joseph F. Miller

Executive Board takes on 'sick system'

Pastoral letter about war in Iraq will be sent to conferences, congregations.

The United States is sick, at least when it comes to health-care access for all its citizens. So the Executive Board has decided to challenge Mennonite Church USA congregations to get involved in this "sick system" and model new ways of taking care of those without health-care access. The Executive Board took the action June 24-26 at meetings in Harrisonburg, Va.

"As followers of Jesus Christ, we believe that our national health-care system is spiritually sick," begins the resolution approved by the Executive Board, "suffering from greed, racism, fear of death and lack of concern for the common good."

The two-part resolution speaks to the church and to government. It first calls on Mennonite Church USA congregations to take 13 specific actions, including "ensuring that fellow members have appropriate access to health care" and adding a line in congregational budgets "for sharing health-care costs in and between congregations."

The resolution then urges the U.S. Congress to "enact a system of national health care" and says that health care "should not be a luxury reserved for the privileged."

The resolution—along with stories of health-care access issues—may be the only resolution addressed by delegates to the Charlotte 2005 assembly. The group leading the process will begin gathering stories of health-care access issues to accompany the resolution.

The Executive Board also took action to address another acute-care issue facing the United States: the war in Iraq. Called "A Pastoral Letter to Congregations from Mennonite Church USA Executive Board in a Time of Global Turmoil," the letter says, "War and peace are not partisan issues," and it calls on members of Mennonite Church USA to "pray for Iraq and especially its 1 million Christians."

The letter encourages church-to-church visits as soon as they become possible, support for the efforts of Christian Peacemaker Teams and Mennonite Central Committee in Iraq and support for Mennonites touched personally by the war. The letter asks congregations to "call upon the U.S. government [to] 'move toward justice, peace and compassion for all people'" (a phrase taken from Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective).

In other actions, the Executive Board adopted two new guidelines related to congregational and conference polity. One establishes the guidelines for the formation of any new conference in Mennonite Church USA. The second establishes guidelines for a congregation wishing to leave its current conference and join another conference. *—Everett J. Thomas*

War and peace are not partisan issues. —Executive Board

Focus on magazine

Board meets The Mennonite *leaders*

The Mennonite and Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board on June 25 discussed how to balance accountability with healthy critique. Joe Roos and Miriam Martin, chair and vice-chair, respectively, for the board of The Mennonite, Inc., and editor Everett J. Thomas shared their vision for moving the magazine closer to the denominational structures. That will include a continued commitment to be a supportive voice on behalf of Mennonite Church USA. It also includes the denomination's support for *The Mennonite*'s need to maintain journalistic freedom inside a framework of accountability and trust.

"The relationship between our magazine and the church is a very, very important one," Roos said. "We want to be a communication instrument that builds up the covenant relationships between various parts of the church—the agencies and area conferences and congregations. At the same time, we also want to maintain journalistic integrity on our pages [and] ... provide a safe place for critical voices."*—Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Everett J. Thomas

Meeting with 'owners'

Each time Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board meets it spends time listening to local pastors and area conference leaders. Basil Marin, pastor of Immanuel Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va., was one of three Harrisonburg-area pastors to describe congregational life in Virginia Conference for Executive Board members. Marin said it was a challenge to "present Jesus Christ in a time when we are so pluralistic" and asked, "How can we keep [certain] who we are and whose we are and still invite others to the table?" Behind Marin is Mennonite Church USA executive director James Schrag (left) and moderator-elect Roy Williams.

Baseball a big hit with Korean children

Mission workers' love for Koreans grows in their work at Jesus Village Church.

When Erwin Wiens was growing up, he often heard reports from returning missionaries at his church. The slides and stories of faraway places fascinated him.

One story, however, troubled him.

"I don't remember the name of the missionaries reporting," he says, "but I remember the wife sobbing and crying out, 'I can't love those children' (referring to the people among whom they lived).

"Wow," he says.

So when he and Marian, his wife, were preparing to serve in South Korea, they recognized the importance of asking God to help them develop a love for the Korean people.

That prayer has been answered in a most interesting way. It began one summer day when a young boy, Minah Kim, expressed the simple wish for somebody to play baseball with.

"My glove and a couple of balls had been sitting in a drawer for over a year," says Wiens, who works jointly through Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness. The couple's primary assignment there is to support the work and ministry of Jesus Village Church, an Anabaptist church community in the city of Chun Chon.

"Minah and I played catch for an hour," Wiens says. "But he wanted to do more than play catch. So I told him to find some friends and meet me on Sunday afternoon at the local elementary school."

That Sunday, Minah brought two fourth-grade friends, plus a kindergartner and a first-grader. Some of them had no idea what baseball was, so the learning curve was steep that first day. Still, they were happy and agreed to meet again the following Sunday. When the day arrived, each child brought friends or siblings. They spent the time learning some more fundamentals of baseball and laughing a great deal.

"By the third week, I felt like the Pied Piper, as our numbers doubled," Wiens says. "A ninth-grader, whose family had spent a year in the United States, came out with a bag full of equipment. Things became more competitive, and the play schedule expanded to Saturdays and Sundays."

At last report, some 20 children showed up wanting to play. Wiens and his young charges sometimes have to share the space with soccer games and teenagers shooting hoops. Before each game Wiens sits everyone down and goes through the basics of baseball. One of the children or a parent translates into Korean.

Recently several parents started coming to watch. One knew enough about the game to help coach. One of the mothers kept score. Other parents brought cases of pop and snacks.

"Korean parents seldom play publicly with their kids," Wiens says. "I suspect that a 60-year-old pastor with limited language skills playing baseball with 20 kids is a novelty. Now parents are beginning to express their appreciation by bringing food to our apartment."

The weekly baseball adventure has grown into an opportunity for evangelism. Several families have begun attending Jesus Village Church and have visited the Wiens home for dinner.

Baseball is just one of the many joys of the couple's time in South Korea. On each morning's walk they offer intercessory prayers for children, families and supporters. They meet so many people on their daily walks that their prayers are often interrupted by greetings from fellow exercisers.

"Loving the people of Jesus Village Church came almost instantly," Wiens says. "We've loved many churches in our lifetime, but we've never loved a church more than this wonderful group of God's people who are growing into an Anabaptist community of prayer, praise, peace and love."

Erwin and Marian Wiens have been in South Korea for two years. They are also involved in the V-School, an alternative school associated with Jesus Village Church, where they teach courses in English, do curriculum-development and counseling work and lead Bible studies. They serve on the church's leadership team and present workshops and lectures sponsored by the Korean Anabaptist Center in Seoul.—*Ann Graham Price of Mennonite Mission Network*

Batter up: A young player takes his place at the plate while Erwin Wiens, in the background, keeps score.

Courtesy photo

Hope for a better world in bitter rubble

Mennonite Church USA peace advocate visits ministries in Middle East.

Susan Mark Landis, peace advocate for Mennonite Church USA, discovered on a recent trip to Israel-Palestine that hope for a better life can determinedly persist even amid the rubble of bitterness.

Landis returned June 6 from visiting Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) ministries in Bethlehem and Jerusalem and participating in a Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) delegation in those two cities and Hebron. During her May 21-June 6 journey she found people on both sides of Arab-Israeli issues who are working for justice and security in their strife-torn lands.

She met people from Jewish, Christian and Muslim backgrounds who are working together for peace. "I went to find how people continue to have hope, and I found people of faith who cope in the face of unreasonable odds," Landis says. "It's not a happy, smiley hope. It has nothing to do with optimism. It's a dogged determination to do what can be done; to find groceries even when it takes hours to get through checkpoints; to school the kids even during curfew."

Landis shares how she met a Muslim woman in Hebron who translates for CPT. She created a nursery school for Palestinian children to give them a place to play during curfew. "She wanted to make a safe haven for the children in the midst of all that's going on," Landis says.

Landis describes how a curfew in Hebron a year ago—the curfew is now lifted—made it impossible for children to use the streets to get to school. "The kids jumped from rooftop to rooftop until they got to the home of a woman who had a ladder leading from her back door down to a street they were allowed to walk on to school."

Along with such stories of hope, Landis wants to share the desire of the people in the Middle East that North Americans become informed about their government's policies in that region and use their influence to promote peace.

They also have a passion to know whether U.S. citizens care, she says. "They really hunger to know if we care and want us to do something tangible to show that care."

Landis strove to communicate Mennonite Church USA's care in tangible ways during her trip, she says. She wanted to renew her passion for peacemaking and to have face-to-face fellowship with those scarred by violence.

She visited MCC sites in Bethlehem and Jerusalem, where she accompanied MCC workers Alain Epp Weaver and Ed Nyce to partner ministries. MCC began work in Palestine in 1949. Then she joined the CPT delegation in Hebron. CPT has been in Hebron since 1995—invited by the mayor—to provide violence reduction, including being a peaceful presence in the neighborhoods.

Ryan Beiler

Susan Mark Landis (middle), peace advocate for Mennonite Church USA, visits with Amira Siloni (right), a member of the "Stop the Wall" campaign in Hebron, and Salah Ayad. The wall has carved up his land, destroyed his livelihood and limited his ability to visit family and friends.

"People in the United States often ask if I side with the Palestinians or Israelis, but there is a different division that guides MCC and CPT's work," she says. "People are trying to solve the problems of this region in two ways: Some turn toward violence and others toward peacemaking. We side with the peacemakers.

"We want to be in solidarity with all those who are being peacemakers, no matter what their background. ... I met with Israelis and Palestinians, people of the Jewish, Muslim and Christian faiths, men and women's groups—all people who work diligently to find hope and solutions. ... God cares about all the people on both sides, but it's obvious that the Palestinians are suffering more, and we have to take that injustice into account. ... I want to side with anyone who is working toward a just peace."

People are trying to solve the problems of this region in two ways: Some turn toward violence and others toward peacemaking. We side with the peacemakers.—Susan Mark Landis

CPT arranged time with many groups working for peace in the region. They included a group striving to stop the building of a wall between Israel and Palestine; Rabbis for Human Rights; Israelis Campaign Against Home Demolition and Bereaved Families. That group consists of both Israelis and Palestinians who support each other in their grief over losing loved ones through violence and in the decision to seek reconciliation rather than revenge.

Landis believes that reducing violence is part of Mennonite Church USA's ministry at home and around the world. But no one person can tackle all the unjust and violence issues at once.

"If we think we have to solve abortion, racism, the death penalty and Israel-Palestine issues all at once, we'll get paralyzed," Landis says. "But if we stay with one issue over the long haul, we can begin to see the breadth of possibilities and all the people who are making a difference."—*Laurie L. Oswald, news service director for Mennonite Church USA*

Scholarship plan flourishes in Pennsylvania

Students receive $3.2 million in tuition aid, one of the state's largest programs.

Courtesy photo

Fortunate: Allandria Edwards (center) with friends Leah Curcio, Heather Landes, Emily Landis and Loriane Bundu at Christopher Dock's graduation on June 12.

Allandria Edwards, the adopted daughter of a woman disabled from the effects of epilepsy, feels fortunate to be attending Christopher Dock Mennonite High School in Lansdale, Pa.

"I'm glad I went to Christopher Dock because of the warm, accepting community of people who really care about you," she says. "The teachers put themselves out for you; they'll take time out to help, even if it's with stuff that isn't school related. I'll miss high school." She plans to attend college to study medicine following graduation.

Christopher Dock and other Mennonite schools in the state have been increasing their financial aid to Allandria and other students thanks to a relatively new program, the Pennsylvania Mennonite Scholarship Organization (PAMSO).

PAMSO was founded after Pennsylvania considered the nationally publicized school voucher option but decided to head down an alternative path. The state created its Educational Improvement Tax Credit to give businesses generous tax credits for contributions made to scholarship organizations.

Dick Thomas, superintendent of Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School, led the effort in 2001 to create such a scholarship group with representatives from 21 secondary and elementary Mennonite schools. PAMSO was formed as a result, tapping MMA's Mennonite Foundation to manage the funds and administer the program.

During its first 2½ years, PAMSO has already distributed $3.2 million in scholarships to students attending Mennonite schools in Pennsylvania.

"Among the 143 similar programs statewide, PAMSO has received the second or third highest amount from donors annually," says Marlin Hershey, the foundation's Eastern Regional Representative. "Businesspeople here are really stewardship minded. And, this program benefits our students and their businesses."

The state plan offers significant incentives to businesses, allowing a 75 percent tax credit for donations they make to scholarship organizations such as PAMSO. The credits jump to 90 percent if corporations commit for two consecutive years. Businesses can donate up to $200,000 annually.

Like school vouchers, the Pennsylvania program helps families below and above the poverty line but does have income limits. The household gross income of scholarship recipients is limited to $50,000, plus $10,000 for each additional dependent, up to a $90,000 total annually.

State rules dictate 80 percent of donations must be used for scholarships, leaving a maximum of 20 percent for administration. Through Mennonite Foundation, PAMSO's operating expenses have ranged from 2 to 3 percent, leaving 97 percent or more for scholarships.

Low expenses have meant more aid for students such as Ezra Nafziger, 17, of Pottstown. He says that graduating from Christopher Dock he will attend college part time. Ezra also wants to experience mission work abroad, a possibility he says he would not have considered without exposure to a Christian school. He hopes his five siblings someday have a chance to attend the school, too.—*Judy Martin Godshalk of MMA*

Business people here are really stewardship minded. And, this program benefits our students and their businesses.
—Marlin Hershey

Randy Coblentz

Learning service at Mennonite high school

Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School students Jennica Garber, left, and Jason Landis prepare to install siding for a young family whose home burned several months earlier. Garber attends Mountville Mennonite Church, and Landis attends Lititz Mennonite. Their work was part of a four-day mini-course the school offers during the last week of classes.

MCC looks at terrorism and security issues

Annual meeting also approves planning framework for international program.

Mennonite Central Committee board members from across the United States and Canada gathered June 11-12 in Akron, Pa., for the MCC Annual Meeting. Highlights included the approval of a new International Program Department planning framework and discussion of how terrorism and security issues affect MCC's work around the world.

Held alternately at MCC headquarters in Akron, Pa., and various locations in North America, Annual Meeting is a forum for board members to give input as well as to review and give or withhold approval of MCC program plans and budget for the upcoming year.

MCC's International Program Department is engaged in a multiyear process to strengthen planning, monitoring and evaluation procedures. During the past two years, discussions with board members and service workers have addressed questions at the heart of MCC's identity.

A "strategic directions" document approved by the board affirmed the following:

- that MCC remain structurally accountable to its constituency (Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches) in Canada and the United States, while consulting and collaborating with Anabaptist churches in other countries;
- that opportunities for service in both short- and long-term positions be increased;
- that MCC continue to rely primarily on its constituents for resources, while also seeking grants and resources from other sources "not in conflict with MCC principles" and
- that MCC seek to work primarily with local partner organizations.

The planning framework also includes program values, goals and operating principles, all designed to stem from previously established principles that guide MCC's work.

In addition to discussion of planning issues, Annual Meeting workshops for board members included "The Dilemmas of the Militarization of Humanitarian Aid" and "Haiti: Case Study of How MCC Operates in a Crisis." In these workshops—as well as in conversation among staff and board members and in a Friday night symposium on "The Role of the Church in an Age of Terrorism"—participants wrestled with MCC's response to the changing global security situation.

During the recent U.S.-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the lines between military operations and humanitarian aid have been blurred, said Willie Reimer, director of MCC Food, Disaster and Material Resources. As military personnel and government-associated civilian contractors take part in aid efforts designed to secure "hearts and minds," the neutrality of all aid workers has become suspect.

These changes have made aid workers more vulnerable to attacks by those who associate them with perceived U.S. efforts to dominate and conquer. In this context—"in the midst of a world that often listens to empire"—it becomes even more important for Anabaptists to offer an alternative vision for mission and outreach, said MCC executive director Ron Mathies during his opening remarks to the board.

Drawing from her experiences as an MCC worker in war-torn Colombia, Bonnie Klassen offered insight into how to shape this vision. She gave examples of "everyday resurrections" in Colombia, such as the forgiveness and love she witnessed between Colombians and North American visitors, while also noting that true hope and security come only from faith in the ultimate resurrection.

"I believe that Jesus will not let the violence go on forever," she said. "Jesus' beloved children will be gathered up, and all tears will be wiped from their eyes."—*Rachel B. Miller Moreland of MCC News Service*

John Sharp

Zurich memorial marker acknowledges sin against Anabaptists

A memorial marker for Felix Manz, Hans Landis and five other Anabaptists was unveiled June 26 in Zurich, Switzerland, 479 years after Manz's execution by drowning in the Limmat River. The plaque was dedicated during the Reformed-Anabaptist reconciliation conference. Pictured above are Christoph Sigrist, pastor of the Grossmunster, Zurich; William McGrath, Ireland; Dan Yoder, Ireland; Horst Gerlach, Germany; Robert Neukomn, Zurich city council member; and Ruedi Reich, president of the Reformed Church of the Canton of Zurich. The Reformed Church of the Canton of Zurich and the Zurich city council installed the marker as a symbol of their regret for the execution of Anabaptists. Their statement said: "We acknowledge this historic sin and, from today's point of view, consider it a betrayal of the gospel. Before God ... we point to this dark side of the Reformation, and we ask God and you, dear brothers and sisters of the Mennonite faith, to forgive us."

Mennonite Disaster Service there long-term

Volunteers helping rebuild Illinois church after devastating tornado hits town

After a tornado leveled the Forest Valley (Ill.) Community Church, Pearl Jackson, the church's pastor, received a phone call that rebuilt her spirit. "It was a lady whose church had also been destroyed," Jackson says. "And I thought, If she can do it, so can I. She'd been there."

Every so often the phone still rings, says Jackson. "People have called all the way from Canada. If it wasn't for those nice words, you would feel awful low. You know, people do care."

Now Jackson's church will be rebuilt as well, thanks to volunteer crews managed by Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS).

The building—sanctuary since 1962 for a 24-member congregation in rural Kankakee County in northeast Illinois—was constructed to withstand a lot of wind, says Jackson, but not the tornado that hit it April 20. "We built it ourselves," she says.

The independent, nondenominational congregation realized that without outside support they could never rebuild, says Jackson. Thanks to her perseverance—along with help from MDS, Church World Service and others from the faith community—the congregation will rebuild on the same site. For now they are worshiping in a house.

> **When it's time for long-term rebuilding, volunteers are often harder to come by, Wetzel says. "Then we have to scurry around and find them."**

MDS plans to begin construction soon, Jackson says, "and thank God for them."

A severe storm spawned more than 20 tornadoes and cut a two-mile swath through north central Illinois April 20, collapsing buildings and destroying hundreds of homes. Some 668 homes and businesses were affected in four counties, with more than 300 homes sustaining major damage, according to Illinois emergency management officials.

The needs of a small church in rural Forest Valley could easily have gone unnoticed, says Conrad Wetzel, president of the board of the Illinois MDS chapter. "It's a very impoverished area," he says, "one of the poorest economic situations in Illinois."

Three days after the tornado, MDS representatives met Jackson and some of her church members. "There is a small Mennonite church two to three miles from that church, and members of that church were helping Rev. Jackson clean up her site," Wetzel says.

MDS has trained volunteers who well know the complexities of rebuilding a church or a home. In Kankakee County, blueprints for a building must be approved by a licensed architect from the state—a cost that can run a couple thousand dollars. "We located an excellent architect who would work pro bono," says Wetzel. "He had done some work in that area, and he has given us other information that will be useful in the building process. He is a very fine person."

MDS has already coordinated volunteers to do some cleanup work. The local Mennonite church has loaned its parsonage, which was vacant, to house volunteers. MDS has already completed work on the parsonage, so it's in shape to house volunteers.

The last hurdle before beginning construction is a survey of the site. "That would normally cost $1,500, but we have a surveyor coming from Indiana to do it for free," says Wetzel.

MDS has also selected experienced project directors who will live on-site and coordinate the work. Wetzel urges people not to forget disaster survivors everywhere who need long-term help, long after their situation leaves the headlines.

In fact, volunteers who descend on a disaster site immediately after the disaster hits do more harm than good, he says. Often local resources aren't set up to handle an influx of people, and severely damaged areas are often roped off so emergency crews can work.

In Utica, Ill.—another community that sustained severe tornado damage—response teams were not letting people in right after the twister struck. "But people were saying they really wanted to come and help," says Wetzel. "When they heard their services weren't needed just yet, they said, 'But we have to get there now. That way we can be on TV.' "

When it's time for long-term rebuilding, volunteers are often harder to come by, he says. "Then we have to scurry around and find them."—*Susan Kim of Disaster News Network*

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Mennonite Secondary Education Council

WORKERS

Aguirre, Costanzo, was licensed March 7 at Centro Cristiano Vida Abundante, Aurora, Ill.

Araujo, David, was ordained May 16 at Iglesia Menonita Getsemani, East Chicago, Ind.

Burkholder, Brian M., was ordained June 13 as campus pastor at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

Dunigans, Jesse, was installed Feb. 22 as pastor at Bethesda Mennonite Church, St. Louis.

Dupay, George, was ordained May 30 as pastor at Big Spring Mennonite Church, Luray, Va.

Elias, Lillian, was ordained May 23 as pastor at Parkview Mennonite Church, Kokomo, Ind.

Erb, Ross, was licensed May 16 as associate pastor for children at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Funk, Jeremy, was licensed June 6 at Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Galati, Jr., Mauro A., was licensed March 7 as pastor of evangelism at Rohrerstown Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Gary, Joe, was ordained May 30 as pastor at Church Without Walls, Elkhart, Ind.

Gerber, Shawn, was licensed May 9 as chaplain at University of Virginia Medical Center, Charlottesville, Va.

Groff, Dwight L., was ordained March 14 as lead pastor at Kinzer (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Hartzler, Bob, ended June 15 as interim pastor at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa.

Landis, Keith L., was ordained June 6 as minister and pastor at South Union Mennonite Church, West Liberty, Ohio.

Luitjens, Nathan, was licensed and installed June 27 as pastor at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa.

Musser, Aldine, was licensed May 9 as co-pastor at Stephens City (Va.) Mennonite Church.

Pauls, Jeffrey G., was ordained March 14 as associate pastor at Kinzer (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Roth, Melissa, was licensed Jan. 11 at St. Louis (Mo.) Mennonite Fellowship.

Sommer, Susan, was licensed and commissioned March 27 at Illinois Mennonite Conference.

Stair, Tim, was ordained May 23 as pastor at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bergey, Lane Henry, June 9, to Mark and Darla Balmer Bergey, Sellersville, Pa.

Bethune, Rheagan Elizabeth, June 10, to Craig and Danielle Friesen Bethune, York, Neb.

Buehler, Andrew Jason and Ryan James (twins), June 3, to Mark and Marilyn Zimmerman Buehler, Bolton, Ont.

Conklin, Kendrick Owen and Jeremiah Bernard (twins), Oct. 7, 2002, received for adoption June 8 by Michael and Thelma Gochnauer Conklin, Manheim, Pa.

Dick, Elsa Rae, May 22, to Jamie and Candace Bottorf Dick, Henderson, Neb.

Figueroa, Genesis Michelle, June 2, to Norlan and Deysi Posada Figueroa, Millersburg, Ohio.

Fisher, Andrew Noah, June 7, to Jeff and Anita Gerber Fisher, Wooster, Ohio.

Flinner, Sophia Adeline, April 21, to Matthew and Kris Miller Flinner, Dover, Ohio.

Friesen, Jacob Lee, May 6, to Brent and Natalie Richter Friesen, Lincoln, Neb.

Garber, Chloe Wren, May 23, to Derrick and Jennifer Dilcher Garber, Lancaster, Pa.

Gertz, Paige Marie, June 8, to Chris and Krisi Gertz, Millersburg, Ohio.

Gingerich-Boberg, Simone Lerato, May 6, to Pierre and Lori Gingerich-Boberg, St. Paul, Minn.

Graber, Levi Philip, April 23, to Danny and Sylvia Moon Graber, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

Graber, Lindsey Anne, June 9, to Terry and DeLane Miller Graber, Goshen, Ind.

Hanson, Kellen Charles, April 13, to Josh and Karen Buerge Hanson, Pendleton, Ore.

Harder, Ella Jane, April 28, to Dillon and Amy Yutzy Harder, Monument, Colo.

Hupp, Samuel Barlow, May 30, to David Hupp and Katy Gray Brown, Minneapolis.

Kaufman, Braden Reed, May 18, to Austin and Kari Krabill Kaufman, Wooster, Ohio.

Keiser, Levi John, June 5, to Matthew and Rebecca Ritland Keiser, Minneapolis.

Keller, Colten Shane, May 28, to Shane and Amy Alwine Keller, Tylersport, Pa.

King, Jordan Rose, May 25, to Mark and Julia Burkholder King, Wauseon, Ohio.

Konopinski, Drew Louis, June 10, to Rob and Andrea Liestman Konopinski, South Bend, Ind.

Leininger, Emma Nicole, June 1, to Nicholas and Ruby Short Leininger, Archbold, Ohio.

Lonergan, Ryan Eva McQueen, June 3, to Jared and Sandra Goertzen Lonergan, San Marcos, Calif.

Luecke, Danea Lois, May 29, to Ed and Cinda Detweiler Luecke, Chalfont, Pa.

McLane, Lachlin John O'Donnell, May 4, to Chris and Meghan O'Donnell McLane, Lancaster, Pa.

Melanson, Alexis Christine, May 31, to Justin and Kari Hostetler Melanson, Belleville, Pa.

Miller, Jared Christopher, May 13, to Jason and Kim Miller, Millersburg, Ohio.

Miller, Rebecca Nicole, May 28, to Scott and Yadira Romero Miller, Columbus, Ohio.

DISCOVERING THE WORLD FOR 35 YEARS

2004 TOURS

CANADIAN MARITIME PROVINCES (August 7-16)
SWISS GLACIER EXPRESS (August 9-24)
IRELAND (September 3-14)
SWISS-VOLHYNIAN MENNONITE HERITAGE (September 15-29)
LANDS of the BIBLE (September 17-30)
CHINA (October 3-19)
FALL FOLIAGE TOUR of NEW ENGLAND (October 4-10)
CHRISTMAS MARKETS in AUSTRIA and GERMANY (December 1-8)

2005 TOURS

SERVICE TOUR in SUNNY JAMAICA (January 21-30)
CHURCHES and SAFARIS in KENYA and TANZANIA (February 13-24)
PARAGUAY SERVICE TOUR (March 31 - April 14)
TULIP TIME in HOLLAND (April 25 - May 4)
IN the FOOTSTEPS of the APOSTLE PAUL (May 27 - June 12)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 8-20)
SWITZERLAND, FRANCE and GERMANY for GRANDPARENTS/GRANDCHILDREN/FAMILIES (June 14-21)
SPECTACULAR SCANDINAVIA and its FJORDS (June 17 - July 1)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE (July 7-22)
SMALL TOWN THEATRES and COUNTRY GARDENS (July 26 - August 1)
RUSSIA and UKRAINE (July 29 - August 12)

2006 TOURS

AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND (February 3-23)

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USA

Mishler, Carter Andrew, June 6, to Nevin and Kari Burkey Mishler, Berlin, Ohio.

Myers, Marissa Louise, May 26, to Keith and Janet Kinsey Myers, Stryker, Ohio.

Nice, Aaron John, April 26, to Spencer and Melissa Baker Nice, Christiansburg, Va.

Nice, Levi Michael, April 8, to Rodney and Lindsey Yancey Nice, Stuarts Draft, Va.

Oakes, Kellan Lee, June 8, to Roger and Kristin Kauffman Oakes, Hubbard, Ore.

Oakleaf, Miriam Joy, May 27, to Michael Oakleaf and Joanne Juhnke, Madison, Wis.

Pyle, Sarah Macy, June 8, to Brian and Cheryl Flaming Ainsworth Pyle, Shawnee, Kan.

Reeves, Gavin Daniel, June 3, to Greg and Jill Schultz Reeves, Wichita, Kan.

Regier, Jacob William, May 13, to Derrick and Anne Randles Regier, Henderson, Neb.

Riley, Aiden Patrick, April 17, to Matthew and Kylene Kiser Riley, Gordonsville, Va.

Roth, Rebecca Elizabeth, April 21, to Arlin and Geri Thomas Roth, Belle Fonte, Pa.

Schrag, Timothy Daniel and Jacob Warren (twins), March 8, to Eric and Gretchen Gering Schrag, Goessel, Kan.

Schuck, Hannah Elizabeth, May 8, to Josh and Jessica Zehr Schuck, Peoria, Ill.

Siegrist, Anneka Elisabeth, May 5, to Brent and Katrina Mullet Siegrist, Nairobi, Kenya.

Smith, Keri Leigh, May 7, to Adam and Leeann Friesen Smith, Kearney, Neb.

Tabolt, Trudy Mae, May 13, to Bruce and Robin Widrick Tabolt, Croghan, N.Y.

Weishaupt, Rylee Emelia, May 23, to Jonathan and Aimee Janssen Weishaupt, Goshen, Ind.

Yoder, Caryn Aylane, May 25, to Derek and Joy Smith Yoder, Hesston, Kan.

Yoder, Elijah Jason, June 3, to Jason and Sharon Miller Yoder, Harleysville, Pa.

MARRIAGES

Anderson/Eberspacher: Jennifer Anderson, Pleasant Dale, Neb., and Brad Eberspacher, Milford, Neb., May 29 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

Berg/Douple: Alfredo Berg, Brazil, and Elizabeth Douple, Ephrata, Pa., May 9 at the bride's home, Ephrata.

Best/Stucky: Katie Best, Buhler, Kan., and Alan Stucky, Buhler, June 5 at Hutchinson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren.

Bontrager/Hall: Warren Bontrager, Buhler, Kan., and Emilie Hall, Hartville, Ohio, May 8 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Boshart/Perlenfein: Todd Boshart, Tangent, Ore., and Amber Perlenfein, Albany, Ore., May 15 at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Albany.

Burkey/Dick: Anna Burkey, Dorchester, Neb., and Jayme Dick, Delfte, Minn., May 30 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford, Neb.

Carlson/Neisius: Charles Carlson, Odin, Minn., and Jessie Neisius, Eagen, Minn., July 23 in Shoreview, Minn.

Copeland/Lehman: Travis Copeland, Erie, Pa., and Jamie Lehman, Port Royal, Pa., May 22 at Lost Creek Mennonite Church, Mifflintown, Pa.

Duncan/Shoemaker: Tama Duncan, Asheville, N.C., and Tim Shoemaker, Harrisonburg, Va., May 22 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

Goss/Peachey: Brandi Goss, Belleville, Pa., and David Peachey, Belleville, May 29 at Locust Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Harder/Shetler: Dierdre Harder, Mountain Lake, Minn., and Ben Shetler, Phoenix, Ariz., June 12 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake.

Janzen/Tierce: Lindsey Janzen, Buhler, Kan., and Kaleb Tierce, Texas, March 6 at Buhler Mennonite Church.

King/Reaver: Scott King, Wauseon, Ohio, and Kelsey Reaver, Wauseon, May 22 at North Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon.

King/Wyse: Josh King, Archbold, Ohio, and Jenny Wyse, Pettisville, Ohio, April 24 at St. James Lutheran Church, Burlington, Ohio.

Michaels/Ullinger: John Michaels, Millersburg, Ohio, and Christi Ullinger, Kent, Ohio, May 30 at Camp Luz, Orville, Ohio.

Rodriguez/Yoder: Diego Rodriguez, Choele Choel, Argentina, and Erika Yoder, Kalona, Iowa, May 22 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Schroeder/Wall: Norman Schroeder, Canton, Kan., and Leona Gehring Wall, Buhler, Kan., March 20 at Buhler Mennonite Church.

DEATHS

Block, Steven G., 54, Henderson, Neb., died May 14. Spouse: Lynette Klassen Block. Parents: Abe and Irene Buller Block. Children: Kara, Krista. Funeral: May 17 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Bowman, Andrew, 87, Cambridge, Ont., died May 27. Spouse: Viola Burkhart Bowman. Parents: John and Esther Brubacher Bowman. Children: Karen Janzen, Bryan; five grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 1 at Breslau (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Epp, Herman H., 88, Henderson, Neb., died May 28. Spouse: Emma Friesen Epp (deceased). Parents: Jacob M. and Marie Peters Epp. Children: Roger, Stanley, Ardell, Dara Dean Peters, Mary Ellen Pankratz, Ardenna Friesen; 17 grandchildren; 32 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 1 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Fliginger, Jacob Jr., 84, Marion, S.D., died May 17. Parents: Jacob and Lydia Gering Fliginger. Funeral: May 20 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

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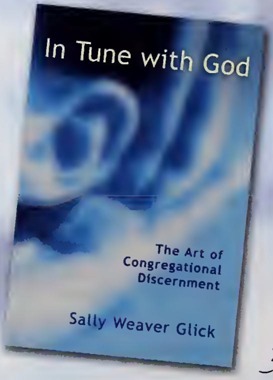

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Frazee, Mildred Fretz, 89, Bluffton, Ohio, died June 4. Spouse: George Frazee (deceased). Parents: J. Clarence and Ella Landis Fretz. Children: George Jr., Donita Sumney; three grandchildren. Funeral: June 8 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Hirschler, Edward E., 104, Hanston, Kan., died May 15. Spouse: Elsie Miller (deceased). Parents: Christian and Elizabeth Ewy Hirschler. Funeral: May 19 at Hanston Mennonite Church.

Hostetler, Alta S. Zimmerman, 99, Hesston, Kan., died May 29. Spouse: Chancy H. Hostetler (deceased). Parents: Jacob J. and Lizzie Troyer Zimmerman. Children: Dalton, Clifton; four grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 2 at Schowalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Hostetler, Lloyd J., 88, Glendive, Mont., died March 22 of heart failure. Spouse: Kathryn (Kaye) Nissley Hostetler. Parents: Alvin and Mary Schloneger Hostetler. Children: Berdine Eby, Jeanette Yoder, Eileen, Larry; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 26 at Evangelical Church of North America, Glendive.

Hughes, Carolyn Smucker, 73, Champaign, Ill., died March 27. Spouse: Roger Hughes (deceased). Parents: Wilbur and Marybelle Stutzman Smucker. Children: Jon, Barbara, Roger Kent; seven grandchildren. Funeral: March 30 at Willow Springs Mennonite Church, Tiskilwa, Ill.

Leasa, Betty Brackbill, 78, Frazer, Pa., died March 23 of cancer. Spouse: W. Kenneth Leasa. Parents: Milton and Ruth Haldeman Brackbill. Children: Varden, Paula Welch, Stephen; eight grandchildren. Funeral: March 27 at Frazer Mennonite Church.

Marner, Max D., 88, Hesston, Kan., died May 25. Spouse: Wanda White Marner. Parents: Gideon G. and Fannie Miller Marner. Children: Wilber, Colleen Marner Beaudoin; four grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 28 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Martin, Anna Bauman, 91, Wakarusa, Ind., died March 30 of congenital heart failure. Spouse: Aaron Martin (deceased). Parents: Annanias and Mary Ann Stauffer Bauman. Children: Eleanor Yoder, Treva, Melba Gerber; six grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 2 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Metzger, Joseph H., 96, Elmira, Ont., died April 18. Spouse: (1st) Katie Martin Metzger (deceased), (2nd) Amanda Bowman Metzger (deceased). Parents: John and Susannah Metzger. Children: Elvina Gingrich, Lorne, Tilman, Eileen Martin, Minerva Martin (deceased); 16 grandchildren; 27 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 21 at Floradale (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Miller, Paul R., 92, Sarasota, Fla., died May 7. Spouse: Anna Ruth Eimen Miller. Parents: Julius J. Miller and Anna Marie Desing. Children: Robert G., John P.; three grandchildren. Funeral: June 12 at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Nice, Alverda Long, 91, Lansdale, Pa., died May 21. Spouse: (1st) Titus M. Landis (deceased), (2nd) Wayne Bergey (deceased), (3rd) Henry Nice (deceased). Parents: Charles and Katie Long. Child: Theodore Landis; four grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 15 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Nofziger, Myrl, 79, Archbold, Ohio, died April 10. Spouse: Donabell Nofziger. Parents: Myron and Viola Nofziger. Children: Wendell, Maretta Conrad, Dan, Neil; eight grandchildren. Funeral: April 13 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

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Pappas, Roger, 54, Champaign, Ill., died March 6. Parents: John and Martha Neuhauser Pappas. Funeral: March 10 at First Mennonite Church, Urbana, Ill.

Penner, Louise Reimer, 85, Beatrice, Neb., died May 10. Spouse: Frank W. Penner. Parents: Abraham and Marie Penner Reimer. Children: Donna Fox, Lawrence, Kathryn Casey, Kristin Ruiz; 10 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 14 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice.

Roggie, Howard J., 72, Castorland, N.Y., died June 4. Spouse: Verna Lehman Roggie. Parents: Benjamin and Madeline Yousey Roggie. Children: Wayne, Benjamin, Glenn, Bradley, Joan, Judy; 17 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 7 at First Mennonite Church of New Bremen, Lowville, N.Y.

Schwartz, Curt F., 82, Marion, S.D., died May 9. Spouse: Violet Nickel Schwartz (deceased). Parents: Fred and Sadie Albrecht Schwartz. Children: Keith, Cindy Herlyn; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 12 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Short, Lois Miller, 75, Middlebury, Ind., died May 23 of a brain tumor. Spouse: Marvin Short. Parents: Charles and Bessie Frey Miller. Children: Mark, Sheryl Dyck, DeeAnn Schmucker, Renee Black, Lisa Jefferies, Melody Short Miller, Sonia Coffy; 18 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 26 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Strausz, Marie R. Doerksen, 92, Buhler, Kan., died May 28. Spouse: Orlando Strausz. Parents: Peter M. and Helena Regehr Doerksen. Children: Marilyn Bontrager, Arlene Joyce Regier, Paul J.; 11 grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 1 at Buhler (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

Stucky, Anna Loucks, 87, Moundridge, Kan., died June 2. Spouse: Orlin Stucky. Parents: Jonas and Nettie Becker Loucks. Child: Phyllis June. Funeral: June 5 at First Mennonite of Christian, Moundridge.

Toews, Susan, 97, Inman, Kan., died May 29. Parents: Jacob Wiens and Katherina Doerksen. Children: Jerry, Francis; five grandchildren. Funeral: June 1 in Inman, Kan.

Watkins, Russell, 81, Inola, Okla., died May 15. Spouse: Marglene Duncan Watkins. Parents: Bert and Adele Smith Watkins. Children: Larry, Shirley; two grandchildren. Funeral: May 18 at Eden Mennonite Church, Inola.

Wenger, Glen, 86, Simpsonville, S.C., died April 25. Spouse: Bertha Miller Wenger. Parents: David and Katie Roth Wenger. Children: Robert, Karen Leichty, Joseph, Esther Leichty, Daniel, Edward, Samuel, Orie; 27 grandchildren; 28 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 29 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa.

Wideman, Mary Martin, 84, Elmira, Ont., died May 5. Spouse: Clayton Wideman (deceased). Parents: Levi and Susannah Martin. Children: John (deceased), Arlene Lambert, Brenda Janeczko; four grandchildren. Funeral: May 10 at Floradale (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.15 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available.

To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Marla Cole, or email TheMennonite@TheMennonite.org.

Freeport Mennonite Church, a rural church with close proximity to Madison, Wis., Rockford, Ill., and Chicago is seeking a full-time lead **pastor.** Position available immediately. Average attendance approximately 90-110. Desire individual with strong preaching, teaching ministry; someone with a vision for growth.

If you feel God's leading to discuss this position with us or can recommend someone else, contact Mike Murray, Search Committee chair, 815-449-2354; jeanettemurray@juno.com.

South Hutchinson Mennonite Church is expanding its pastoral staff team to meet the needs of a growing congregation. We are seeking persons gifted, trained and/or experienced in one or more of the following areas: ***children's ministries, Christian education and discipleship training, worship ministry, small group ministries and lay leadership development.*** Persons interested should submit credentials to Search Committee, SHMC, 808 S. Poplar, South Hutchinson, KS 67505 or shmcoffice@shmc-online.net.

West Clinton Mennonite Church, located in rural Northwest Ohio seeking full-time ***associate pastor.*** Responsibilities include half-time with youth and young adults. For further information contact Marv Leatherman at 419-335-2221 or leather@bright.net.

Mennonite Mission Network seeks a person to serve in its Great Lakes office in Elkhart, Ind., as ***codirector for Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS).*** This person will be passionate about service as a way to participate in God's mission in the world and experienced and able to provide vision, program leadership and financial management in a team environment for sustaining and developing the MVS program, as well as contributing to the Mission Network as a whole. Qualifications include a strong ability to initiate and nurture individual, group and corporate relationships, ability to relate to people with differing theological and cultural assumptions and experience in mission/service. They must be open to frequent travel, be physically able to travel independently and flexible in work schedule. They will be comfortable communicating by telephone and email and have good computer skills. For more information please call Human Resources at 866-866-2872, or email a letter of interest and your resumé to staffrecruitment@mennonitemission.net.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks a full-time ***director of development*** to manage the planning and work of the seminary Development Office, with primary focus on raising funds for the annual operational budget and raising endowment funds, beginning Sept. 1, 2004, or when available. Qualifications include commitment to Jesus Christ and to the mission of the seminary, ability to communicate well and relate well with others, proven track record in development or marketing and proven supervisory and organizational skills. AMBS is an equal opportunity employer; women and members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. To apply, send a resumé, three references and letter of application by July 30, 2004, to Ron Ringenberg, vice president, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, or rringenb@ambs.edu.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks a full-time ***director of admissions and financial aid,*** beginning Sept. 1, 2004, or when available. This person will manage, monitor and modify systems for recruiting students for AMBS programs and for awarding need- and merit-based financial aid. Qualifications include commitment to Jesus Christ and a passion for the mission of the seminary, ability to communicate well and relate well to others, strong attention to details, proven organizational skills, ability to think strategically and availability to travel up to one-quarter time. AMBS is an equal opportunity employer; women and members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. To apply, send a resumé, three references and letter of application by July 20, 2004, to Ron Ringenberg, vice president, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, or rringenb@ambs.edu.

Spanish Jubilee Sunday school materials are now available at reduced prices. Also available is ***Centered Teaching,*** a supplement for adapting Jubilee to broadly-graded groups. To order, call Faith & Life Resources: 800-245-7894. Find Spanish materials pricing and a sample session of *Centered Teaching* at www.jubileeonline.org.

Camp Men-O-Lan, an established, year-round Mennonite camp in eastern Pennsylvania seeks ***camp administrator*** with educational credentials and background in camp/conference center or related business administration. Candidate will oversee staff of 10, growing budget, 174-acre property and help plan and implement master plan for new era of camp program and facility development. Successful experience in marketing, leading/assisting capital campaigns and development/fund-raising desired. Interested candidates should send resumés to Adrian Gordon, c/o Camp Men-O-Lan, 1415 Doerr Road., Quakertown, PA 18951.

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Mennonite Central Committee U.S.'s Office on Crime and Justice and Mennonite Concilation Service are sponsoring an ***advanced training institute entitled "Working with Groups"*** Oct. 11-15 at the MCC Welcoming Place, Akron, Pa. The cost is $450 ($500 for registrations received after Sept. 17); some scholarship assistance is available. For more information, visit www.mcc.org/us/peaceandjustice/mcs.html or contact MCS at P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501, 717-859-1151; mcs@mccus.org.

Thurston Woods Village in Sturgis, Mich., is celebrating 50 years of service to the elderly with an open house on Aug. 22. We need ***help gathering historical information, documents, pictures, etc.*** to display at the open house. If you have memories you would like to share of the old Froh Brothers Homestead (1953-1968), Froh Community Home or Thurston Woods Village as an employee, board member, volunteer, through a resident, with Voluntary Service, etc., please contact Chris Kline; phone 269-651-7841; 307 N. Franks Ave., Sturgis, MI 49091; or email chriskline@thurstonwoods.org.

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Oaklawn has an immediate opening for a ***coordinator*** for our wraparound team. Candidate will supervise a team of facilitators that works with families and children in an innovative community-based process that provides leadership to the development of systems of care in Elkhart County. Requirements include a Master's in social work with LSW or LCSW licensure or a Master's degree with an LMHC. You may download a printable application at our Web site, www.oaklawn.org; email a resumé to humanresources@oaklawn.org; or mail or fax to Attn: Human Resources, Oaklawn, P.O. Box 809, Goshen, IN 46527; fax 574-537-2698. An equal opportunity employer.

Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes (MCCGL) is recruiting for the position of ***assistant director/resource development manager.*** This is a two-year, full-time, salaried position based in Goshen, Ind. This person will broadly be responsible for oversight to the work of peace and justice, resource generation and office responsibilities, and will supervise staff who are involved in those areas. A primary focus for the resource development role will be to connect with constituents sharing resources with the work of MCC. This person will be responsible to meet with constituent churches, organizations and individuals to provide information regarding giving to MCC. Initiative and cross-cultural communication skills are crucial to this role as well as a talent for building information and action coalitions. Fax resumé to 717-859-2171 or email psd@mcc.org or phone Prem Dick or Anna Reimer at 717-859-1151.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking qualified applicants for the position of ***vice president for advancement.*** This position is responsible for soliciting financial resources with select major donors and provides leadership for the alumni and parent relations, development and foundation and corporation relations. The position also oversees, directly or indirectly, those persons responsible for seminary development, university church relations and community relations, special projects and the partners in peacebuilding coordinator. The vice president is responsible to initiate a division planning and evaluation cycle; generate constituency and academic program support; be creative in formulating short-term and long-range funding plans and strategy; and provide vision for and cooperate with all EMU marketing efforts. Terminal doctorate or master's degree preferred, baccalaureate degree required with special skills in fund-raising, administration and marketing. Five or more years work experience as a chief development officer for the institution/organization.

For more information visit our Web site at www.emu.edu. Send letter of application, resumé and three references to Human Resources Office, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; fax 540-432-4444. Review of applications will begin immediately. The position will remain open until filled. Persons who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

Full-time position available at **Mennonite Financial**'s Ephrata, Pa., branch. Primary responsibilities include business development and consumer and small-business lending. Mennonite Financial is a credit union that serves the Anabaptist community in the United States.

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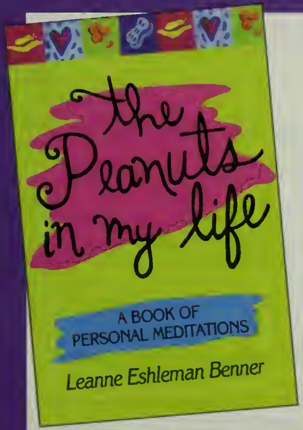

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Good Books

Guided Lives: Memoirs of a Mennonite Missionary Couple to India by Lubin and Tillie Jantzen (Lubin and Tillie Jantzen, 2004, $19.99) is the autobiography of a Mennonite couple who served 37 years as missionaries to India. It includes numerous photos. It is available from Provident Bookstores.

Soul Sisters: Women in Scripture Speak to Women Today by Edwina Gateley, art by Louis Glanzman (Orbis Books, 2003, $20), and **Soul Brothers: Men in the Bible Speak to Men Today** by Richard Rohr, art by Louis Glanzman (Orbis Books, 2004, $20), combine sketches of biblical characters with lessons they can teach us. Gateley's poetic reflections cover 12 women from the Gospels. Rohr's prose looks at 12 men from the Bible. The artwork is stunning as well.

MCC Resource Update lists videos and DVDs on a variety of topics, including AIDS, advocacy, church in China, Colombia, domestic abuse, environmental issues, Guatemala, Iraq and Korea. Order from Mennonite Central Committee, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500.

The Transforming Power of a Century: Mennonite Central Committee and Its Evolution in Ontario by Lucille Marr (Pandora Press, 2004, $36.50) outlines the many ways Ontario Mennonites and Brethren in Christ have demonstrated their commitment to peace and service. It includes a bibliography and an index.

In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being: Panentheistic Reflections on God's Presence in a Scientific World, edited by Philip Clayton and Arthur Peacocke (Eerdmans, 2004, $35), brings together essays by scientists and theologians to debate panentheism, the belief that the world is contained within the Divine, although God is also more than the world.

Seeking Paradise: The Spirit of the Shakers by Thomas Merton, edited with an introduction by Paul M. Pearson (Orbis Books, 2003, $24), includes 30 black and white photos by Merton.

Earth Tones: Praying the Psalms with All Creation by Pamela Smith (Twenty-Third Publications, 2004, $12.95) gives readers a voice that helps them reconnect with nature, with the rhythm of the seasons, the growth of new life, with all creatures.

Twelve Strong Women of God: Biblical Models for Today by Marci Alborghetti (Twenty-Third Publications, 2004, $12.95) brings these biblical figures more fully to life and to our life situations. It helps us find answers and direction for life's challenges.

Beautiful Upon the Mountains: Biblical Essays on Mission, Peace and the Reign of God, edited by Mary H. Schertz and Ivan Friesen (Institute of Mennonite Studies and Herald Press, 2004, $18), show that the friction in the church between evangelism and peace activism is neither helpful nor biblical, since mission and peace are inseparable throughout the biblical canon.

Amish Enterprise: From Plows to Profits by Donald B. Kraybill and Steven M. Nolt (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004, $19.95 paperback, $55 hardcover) is based on interviews with more than 150 Amish entrepreneurs and shows the rise and impact of businesses in Amish settlements in Lancaster County, Pa., in recent decades.

God and Violence: Biblical Resources for Living in a Small World by Patricia M. McDonald (Herald Press, 2004, $16.99) argues that many biblical stories contain resources for turning violence to service of God and humanity.

Correction: Order **Illuminations: A Book of Poetry** by Joseph S. Hertzler (see April 6 issue) from www.Amazon.com.

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Connected to other Christians

Everett J. Thomas

I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.—John 15:5

Felix Manz was killed in Zurich, Switzerland, for his Anabaptist convictions in 1527. On June 26, leaders from today's Reformed Church in Zurich—the group responsible for his martyrdom—and 100 Anabaptist leaders from North America gathered on the banks of the Limmat River and placed a marker on the spot where Manz was drowned (see page 23). This happened because "officials of the Reformed Church in Zurich have expressed a desire to acknowledge their 'shadow side,' including 16th- and 17th-century persecution and execution of Anabaptists," said a recent issue of the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*.

The gathering in Zurich is but the latest in a growing number of conversations initiated by other Christian denominations that want to work at reconciliation with Mennonites and Anabaptists. These are important conversations for Anabaptists and Mennonites; revisiting our history will help not only those who persecuted our forebears but can bring us a measure of peace and new insights.

For example, Mennonite Church USA recently concluded its first-ever ecumenical dialogue with another denomination—the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA). The report from that series of meetings "recommends that Mennonites and Lutherans ... work more closely in education, worship and social ministry" (see "Mennonite-Lutheran Talks Debate History," May 4).

But these ecumenical conversations also include the global Mennonite and Anabaptist family. Mennonite World Conference, for example, spent the last five years in conversations with the Catholic Church's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity; copies of its reports have been sent to member churches for "study and reaction."

What are we to think about all this attention we are now receiving from other denominations? How can wounds inflicted some 500 years ago be healed by the spiritual descendants of the original victims and offenders? Or what about today's Mennonites and Anabaptists who have little connection to the European story? How should African-American and Native-American Mennonites—whose ancestors had other worries than the ecclesiastical wars in Europe in the 1500s—consider these current conversations? And how significant is such Eurocentric history when some Mennonite and Anabaptist leaders in the global South still struggle to bridge differences with the Roman Catholic Church today?

These questions can be answered only as we talk with those Christians who invite us to the conversations. The church is, after all, an organism and not an organization; Christians who lived in the past as well as Christians around the world today are connected organically to the body of Christ. We are all grafted into the vine that is Jesus Christ. That includes not only Christians living today but also—and especially—those responsible for making martyrs of our early leaders.—*ejt*

We are all grafted into the vine. That includes not only Christians living today but also those who killed our early leaders.

New guidelines for sharing opinions

Over the past several months we have published opinion pieces—letters in Readers Say and the longer Speaking Out column—that included criticisms of various church institutions. Such opinion pieces have been consistent with guidelines we established earlier. We want the pages of *The Mennonite* to be open to the airing of such concerns.

However, church institutions deserve a chance to know about and respond to criticism before reading about an issue for the first time in print. Consequently we now ask those wishing to express such criticisms to first contact the institution and ask for a response to the concern. After this exchange, those who still wish to publish their concerns are free to do so. However, we now reserve the right to invite the institution identified to publish a response following opinion pieces (see other guidelines on page 5).

We also call attention to the disclaimer printed on page 2 of every issue: The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc. or Mennonite Church USA.—*Editors*

The Mennonite

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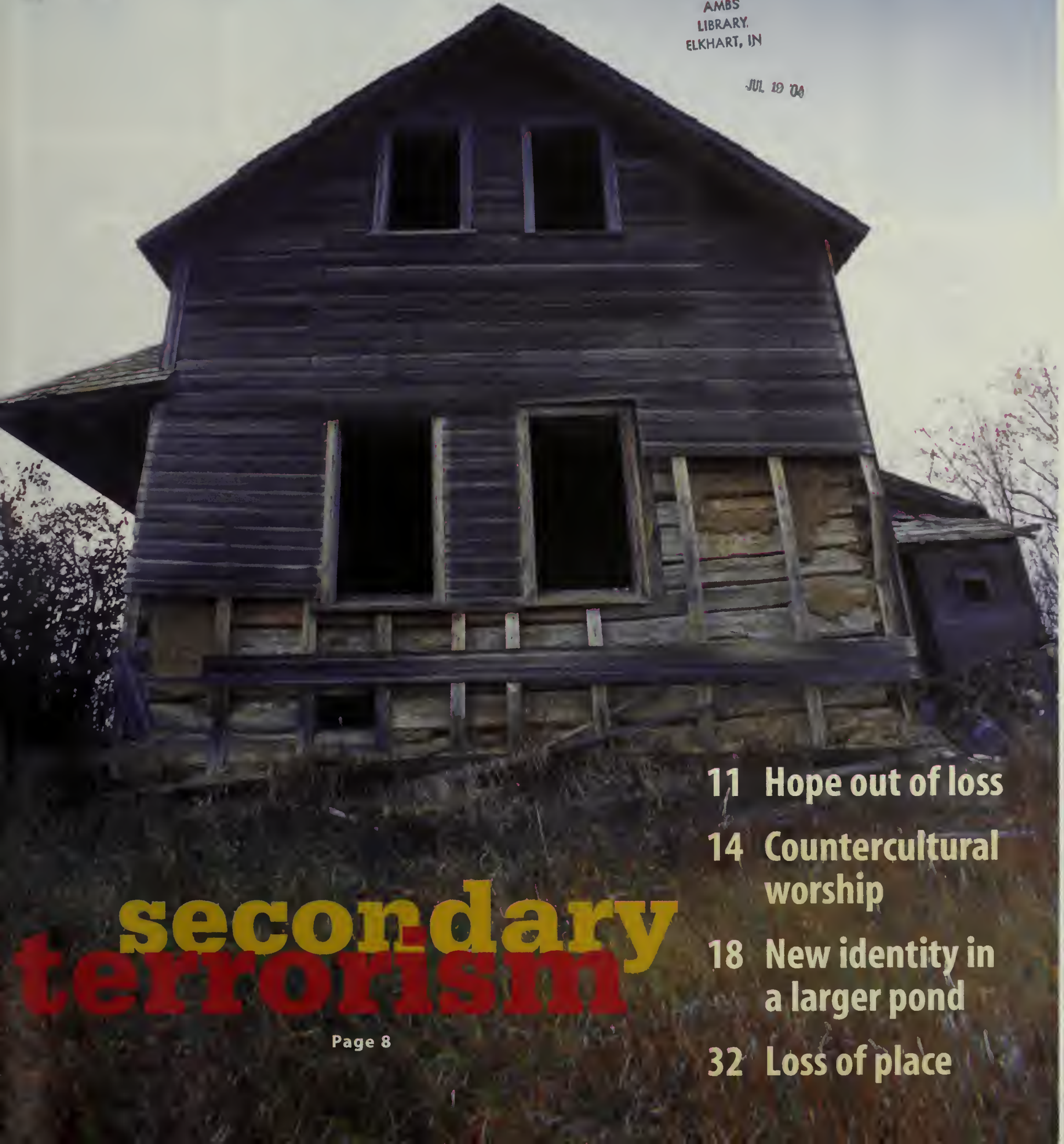

secondary terrorism

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How is God active in our worship?

Ron W. Adams is pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

As a new Mennonite, it does not behoove me to be critical of the traditions and practices of my adoptive denomination. Mennonites got along without me for 500 years or more. What business do I have to ask questions? Then again, I've always been a troublemaker. So I ask.

Why do most Mennonites have such a low view of Communion? Why do we talk about baptism as if it were only a human act?

I exaggerate. But not much.

My spiritual journey has led me through many pastures, not all of them green. I have fed from those pastures, enjoying some more than others but nurtured by all. Lately I have longed for more ritual, more mystery, more of a sense of God's activity in worship. I have found these in the Eastern Orthodox and Catholic traditions.

As a pastor I know it is not fair of me to inflict my spiritual wants on my congregation, to expect Mennonites to be what they are not or become more liturgical or sacramental to meet my needs. Even if I wanted to, such efforts are futile. Too much history, theology and tradition stand in the way. And that's as it should be.

I know it is up to me to meet those needs elsewhere. But my questions remain.

What does it mean to say that God is among us during worship? Is God sitting on a throne receiving what we have to offer? Or is God more active, moving through and around and in us like the wind? Is God's Spirit busy healing, cleansing, anointing, enlivening us as we worship?

If, like me, you say yes to the latter questions, then move with me to the next. What does God do in baptism? In Communion?

In Matthew 18, Jesus promises to be wherever two or three are gathered, lending his presence and power to efforts at reconciliation. My seminary training warns against pulling those words out of context.

Yet if Jesus is present in our reconciling, isn't he also present at the Lord's Table? Or when we follow him in baptism? If so, what is he doing there? Does he lend his power and presence to those acts?

I do not believe the bread and juice become the body and blood. I do not believe baptism is a saving act. But are those really the only alternative views? Isn't there some way to describe and celebrate God's presence in worship without using the language of sacrament?

When I break the bread and tell the story of the Last Supper, I am moved not only by the pathos of the story but by the presence of the Holy Spirit—not in the bread or cup but in a way I don't think can be separated from the act of Communion. Yes, the Spirit is always there in worship. But do we not sense that presence more deeply when we eat and drink together? And don't we receive something from that communal act, call it grace or strength or power or simply an affirmation of belonging? Is that not a gift from God?

And isn't Jesus equally present at baptism? And don't we receive something from that act, yet another gift from God?

Before you rush off to write a letter to *The Mennonite*, let me say that I am a Mennonite. No other part of Christ's body draws me or matches so well my understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. I am not a closet Catholic or an undercover Episcopalian, just a Mennonite with some questions. I have questions about worship, questions that don't push for change necessarily, just an acknowledgement of the fullness of what God does when we gather, especially when we gather around the Lord's Table or at baptism.

The Trinity is present in those acts and whenever we gather to worship. The Trinity is also active in those acts and whenever we worship. I know how Mennonites talk about the presence. How shall we describe the action?

TheMennonite

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Fatherhood of God

In response to the June 15 issue focusing on "The Fatherhood of God": As members of the Mennonite church and parents of two young daughters, we think it imperative to broaden the language and metaphors we use to describe God to include the feminine and the female experience in equal proportion to the masculine and the male experience. Speaking of the fatherhood of God for a Father's Day issue of *The Mennonite* should call forth an additional issue on the motherhood of God, perhaps for a Mother's Day issue.

As we raise our two young daughters, we search for ways they will be empowered as young girls and as women in this religious tradition. Part of their empowerment will include finding themselves as female reflected in the language we use to name the sacred. We call the church to a more inclusive and comprehensive rendering of the mysterious God by expanding images and language to include the female experience—in this case, motherhood.*—Eric and Kristy Yordy, Goshen, Ind.*

I cringe every time I hear God referred to as father as in Karl E. Steffy's "I Kneel Before the Father" (June 15). This is not because of a concern for political correctness but because of concern for spiritual correctness and linguistic fairness.

As a male I fully recognize both my failings (sins) and positive impact on my children and other people. Similarly I recognize the failings and goodness of all other people. To reduce God to "father" limits God's divine nature and infinite love.

As humans, we label and interpret both earthly and heavenly concepts with familiar words and language. Humans have always done so, of course, and undoubtedly the Bible was composed using language and metaphors comprehensible to people of the day. It is simply impossible to extricate the label "Father" (for God) from our understanding and experience of human fathers and fatherhood. As an apologist for this patriarchal language, Steffy states that women and men are created equal in God's image. All are one in Christ, and God is neither male or female. So why persist with antiquated and damaging male language to refer to God?

The reference to John W. Miller's text—that father is a "relationship" and male is a "gender" (therefore allowing the separation of these two concepts)—completely misses the point. Fathers are males by definition in our lexicon; to differentiate between them is psychologically impossible. To expect someone whose father is absent or abusive to turn around and accept God as his or her "perfect" father—thereby reversing the failings of the earthly father—is to simplify human psychology and denies the impact that emotional deprivation can wreak.*—Carl E. Stafstrom, Madison, Wis.*

Thanks for the June 15 issue on "The Fatherhood of God." The article "I Kneel Before the Father" by Karl Steffy was excellent. It was good to read "A Man Called Father" by Barbara Shisler and "Things I Learned From My Father" by Anonymous. The reflection on Psalm 32 was a thought-provoking Bible study.*—Wayne D. Lawton, Elizabethtown, Pa.*

Smuggling practices into the church?

Re D. Duane Oswald's desire to welcome business entrepreneurs into the church ("The Church Needs Business Entrepreneurs," Leadership, June 15): It is difficult to know what the practice of Oswald's entrepreneur would look like with the exercise of concepts like "empower the community" and "meet business and community needs" and "maximize benefit" from change.

In a competitive consumer economy certain words serve as code for specific practices: "empower" for the capacity to succeed in marketplace competition; "needs" for conditioned consumer wants; "service" for the satisfaction of conditioned wants; "maximize benefit" for reduction of quantitative measurements of usefulness and so on. "Missional" easily becomes code for marketing.

Oswald may want to engage in the coded smuggling of these practices into the church. All vocations should be welcome in the church, but their language-cum-practice needs to be decoded and subordinated to the terms of the gospel. If we smuggle marketing in under the guise of being missional, then we reduce Christian faith to a popularity contest whose purpose is to "give the people what they want." Real Christian faith, however, can be an unpopular struggle with joyful vindication depending entirely on the power of God.*—Gordon Scoville, Beemer, Neb.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Several years after the formation of Mennonite Church USA, it is becoming easier for some to talk about the loss of General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church identities. James Schrag, top staff person for the new denomination, says that "an unexpected feeling of being smaller in the new church is shared by some former GCs and by some racial-ethnic people" (page 18). Melanie Zuercher (page 11) describes the grieving in Western District Conference; it went from being the largest GC conference—with more than half the U.S. GC population—to one of 21 conferences. But Dorothy Nickel Friesen, conference minister for WDC, notes that the struggles in the congregations she oversees are also related to the depopulation of rural America and describes the "secondary terrorism" that is emerging.*—Editors*

Silence supports war

Re the June 1 editorial "Tipping Points": In our form of government it is impossible to be apolitical. Years ago, meeting with a congressman to encourage the passage of the Peace Tax Fund Bill, we were told, "If I don't hear from you, I have every right to assume that you approve of everything that I do." When I had lunch with Senator Hatfield's legislative assistant, he told me that when most congressional office staff receive a personal letter (not a signed form letter) they assume there are another 1,000 people out there that could write a similar letter but just don't bother.

Therefore, I have no choice but to write my respectful disapproval to our legislators on many occasions because silence is viewed as approval. That is why it was so very serious when Everett J. Thomas wrote, "Mennonite Church USA has made no formal statement about the war in Iraq during 2004." That silence is viewed by "the powers that be" as approval. There are, of course, many Mennonites who do approve of the war, but is that the majority and the official position of Mennonite Church USA? *—Daniel Slabaugh, Sturgis, Mich.*

Just adoptions

As the parent of a wonderful daughter born to a Guatemalan mother in the mountains of Guatemala, I must reply to Anton Flores' article "Just Adoptions" (May 4). For us, God worked and moved in our lives spiritually and physically in a way that we had never experienced prior to adoption.

As Anton said, adoption is a concept found in Scripture; we are thankful for the spiritual lessons God taught us through the process of the adoption of our daughter. I share this personal story because I have found that most adoptive parents believe they have walked a divine journey as God leads them through adoption. Here are a few additional points to Anton's article.

In our early research on adoption, we soon realized that the U.S. government has done little to protect the adoptive parents or children in this country. While Anton is correct that the adoption system in other countries is not perfect, the U.S. system is also far from perfect. We switched U.S. agencies after $7,000 and 18 months of lies about our adoption. Later we found that our first agency was moving so slowly because they were working with only one attorney in Guatemala, and that attorney had been "blacklisted" by the U.S. embassy. Such information is never made public by the U.S. government. To "protect" us and the children of Guatemala, our government should have informed us of this.

Many of the problems in the Guatemalan adoptive system have been exploited and exacerbated by UNICEF and the United Nations in Guatemala. But these reports contain only instances—not facts or statistics—because there are no substantiated numbers.

Flores has given credence to these theories. I cannot accept Flores referring to Guatemalan children—the most incredible blessing God has bestowed on us—as "one of (Guatemala's) most valuable exports."*—Marsha Busenitz King, Elkhart, Ind.*

Tripping over Anabaptists

It seems that Leslie Moonves can't help but continue tripping over Anabaptists. Moonves, the president of CBS Television and the corporate face behind the upcoming UPN reality show "Amish in the City," underestimated the zeal with which the Amish, their Mennonite cousins and others would protest such a program when he claimed that the Amish would not have much lobbying power against a TV program.

David Letterman has now introduced a "Late Show" segment where he calls Moonves to banter about the CBS programming line-up, the Masters coverage and other subjects, as well as live up to the Letterman reputation as the heckler of his network bosses. Letterman calls the segment, "More with Les."*—Tony Krabill, Elkhart, Ind.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

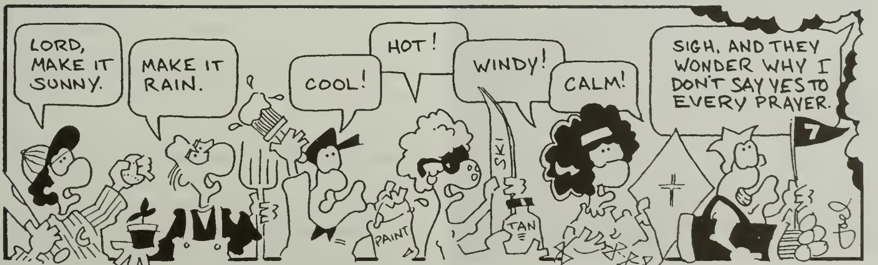
○ We should address God as Father (64%)

○ We should address God as Father and Mother (25%)

○ Not sure (11%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


LORD, MAKE IT SUNNY.
MAKE IT RAIN.
COOL!
HOT!
WINDY!
CALM!
SIGH. AND THEY WONDER WHY I DON'T SAY YES TO EVERY PRAYER.
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IN BRIEF

Bluffton student named fellow for theological fund

Daniel Metzger, Fostoria, Ohio, an upcoming senior at Bluffton (Ohio) College, has been named one of 70 undergraduate fellows for the Fund for Theological Education. As a fellow, Metzger has been awarded $1,500 to apply toward educational costs or to fund a project for further exploration of ministry and $500 toward a mentoring program with a local pastor. Metzger is the first Bluffton student to be named an undergraduate fellow.—*Bluffton College News Service*

Evangelical paper considers identity

The National Association of Evangelicals, which includes 52 denominations, is preparing a self-defining paper for its October board meeting that warns against close alignment with one political party and endorses government-aided social policies that are fair and just for all. While commending patriotism, the statement also says Christians "must be careful to avoid the excesses of nationalism." The draft includes opposition to same-sex marriage, abortion and the use of human embryonic stem cells for research.—*The Christian Century*

Congregations may now switch conferences

HARRISONBURG, Va.—When a Mennonite Church USA congregation decides it wants to switch conferences, it now has a clear process for doing so. One Virginia Mennonite Conference congregation will take advantage of this new process established by the Executive Board June 26.

Earl S. Zimmerman, co-pastor at the 36-member Shalom Mennonite Congregation in Harrisonburg sees it as "a good thing." Shalom, a member in good standing of Virginia Mennonite Conference, applied for membership to Central District Conference in 2003. That application sparked a round of conversations between the two conferences and the Executive Board about what the process should be when a congregation wishes to switch conferences. Zimmerman expects that with the new guidelines, Shalom's application to Central District will be processed in the next year.

The new guidelines establish a different process for a congregation that is not a member of a conference when its membership was terminated for disciplinary reasons. In that process, the conference of origin will provide to the new conference "a written statement of reasons why and how they separated the congregation." If the new conference accepts the congregation, it will then provide to the original conference a statement "explaining why, and on what time frame, they are considering accepting the congregation into membership."
—*Everett J. Thomas*

Courtesy photo

Mennonites consider 'Missional Healthcare'

From left: Dorothy Yoder, RN, Jennifer Wiebe, MD, and Eleanor Martens, RN, talk after the presentation about Hope Centre Health Care in Winnipeg, part of the Mennonite Nurses Association and Mennonite Medical Association, which met June 24-27 in Pinawa, Man., for their annual convention under the theme "Missional Healthcare: Words and Action." Next year's convention will be held June 23-26 at Laurelville Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa.

Hart helps monitor Venezuela election

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Julie Hart, associate professor of sociology and peace studies at Bethel College, North Newton, went to Venezuela May 25-June 1 to work with the Carter Center as an observer for the "reparos" process.

Hugo Chavez was first elected in 1998 and re-elected in 2002. Shortly after that, the political opposition called a national strike that crippled Venezuela for two months and sparked an economic crisis from which it has not recovered.

Last November, the opposition organized a petition drive to recall Chavez, only to see a large percentage of the petition signatures discounted. The "reparos" allowed citizens either to remove their names, if they claimed not to have signed a petition, or to confirm their signatures.

Hart was a member of one of the 25 Carter Center teams that, along with 40 individual observers from the Organization of American States, had to cover 2,700 signature-verification sites across the country. As a result, enough signatures were certified valid for the recall election, now scheduled for Aug. 15, to go forward.

Hart says the "election monitoring is central—especially for 'fledgling democracies'—to the process of democratization, one of the core 'culture of peace' values I teach. It was important to experience what I was teaching."—*Melanie Zuercher*

Bethel students learn about pastoral ministry

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Bethel College juniors Scott Janzen and Hannah Klaassen are learning about pastoral ministry this summer. Their participation in the Ministry Inquiry Program (MIP) is providing them with leadership opportunities in host congregations where members and pastors involve the students in pastoral ministry.

Janzen, from Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Neb., is at Albany (Ore.) Mennonite Church with pastor Matt Friesen.

Klaassen, from Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, Kan., is with pastor Debbie Schmidt at First Mennonite Church, Hutchinson, Kan.

MIP is administered jointly by Mennonite Church USA and five Mennonite colleges and universities in the United States. In most cases, funding is provided by Mennonite Church USA, area conferences, the college, the cooperating congregation and the student's home congregation.—*Bethel College News Service*

Mennonite athletes compete at senior classic

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Sponsored by the Mennonite Association of Retired Persons, the fourth biannual Mennonite Senior Sports Classic brought 88 participants to Eastern Mennonite

Guns, guns everywhere

A young Iraqi boy shows a CPT worker his toy gun. Streets, homes and businesses in Iraq bristle with guns, reports CPT workers. Yet, they say, no one feels secure.

University in Harrisonburg June 17-19. Coming from 10 states, the athletes, ages 50-86, competed in bowling, croquet, tennis, golf, swimming, shuffleboard, horseshoes, power walking, track and field, table tennis, a 5K run, cycling, a home-run derby and "predicted time walks."—*Helen L. Lapp*

CAL and Design For Ministry to collaborate

PASADENA, Calif.—The Center for Anabaptist Leadership (CAL) and Design For Ministry have agreed to collaborate in providing cutting-edge leadership resources for congregations.

Design For Ministry is noted for its broad ecumenical audience across North America. CAL has worked primarily with historic peace churches in Arizona, California, Utah and Nevada, specializing in urban church planting, but is seeking to expand its reach. In 2005, it intends to launch a program to train strategic interim leaders.

Joe Manickam, CAL's director of operations, says, "We are continuously seeking to refine our ministry by listening to our congregations and their needs in ministry. ... Ultimately it is the local congregation who benefits."—*Center for Anabaptist Leadership and Design For Ministry*

'The only Mennonite Internet church'

SAVANNA, Ill.—In 1995, after suffering a disability that confined him to a wheelchair, Bill Heft, who lives in Savanna, felt called, he says, to use his skills in Bible teaching to reach people online. He later began His Storehouse Church of the Internet (www.histore-house.com), which provides free Bible study courses and a church for people around the globe.

A Mennonite, Heft wanted to reach people regardless of denomination. "As far as we know, we are the only Mennonite Internet church in the world," says the Web site. He says the church has 53 members, some as far away as England, and they have had converts.

The church accepts tax-deductible donations for its ministry.—*Gordon Houser*

UPN launching 'Amish in the City' July 28

According to Reuters, the UPN network is launching a controversial new series this month centered on a group of Amish teens as they venture from their rural environs into the outside world.

Debuting July 28 with two consecutive hour-long episodes, "Amish in the City" will follow five Amish youth sharing an ultra-modern house in the Hollywood Hills with six young urbanites, the network said July 8.

UPN, a unit of Viacom Inc., drew criticism and a letter of protest from around 50 members of Congress when plans for the show were first unveiled in January. Many Mennonites have also protested plans for the show, saying it ridiculed the Amish. (See Readers Say, page 5.)

Wayne Gehman

Judy Collins hosts Mennonite documentary

Folksinger Judy Collins goes over her script as host of the documentary *Fierce Goodbye: Living in the Shadow of Suicide* with Mennonite Media producer Burton Buller, Harrisonburg, Va. The program will premiere on Hallmark Channel on Sunday, Aug. 22.

IN BRIEF

Interfaith group apologizes to Muslims for abuse

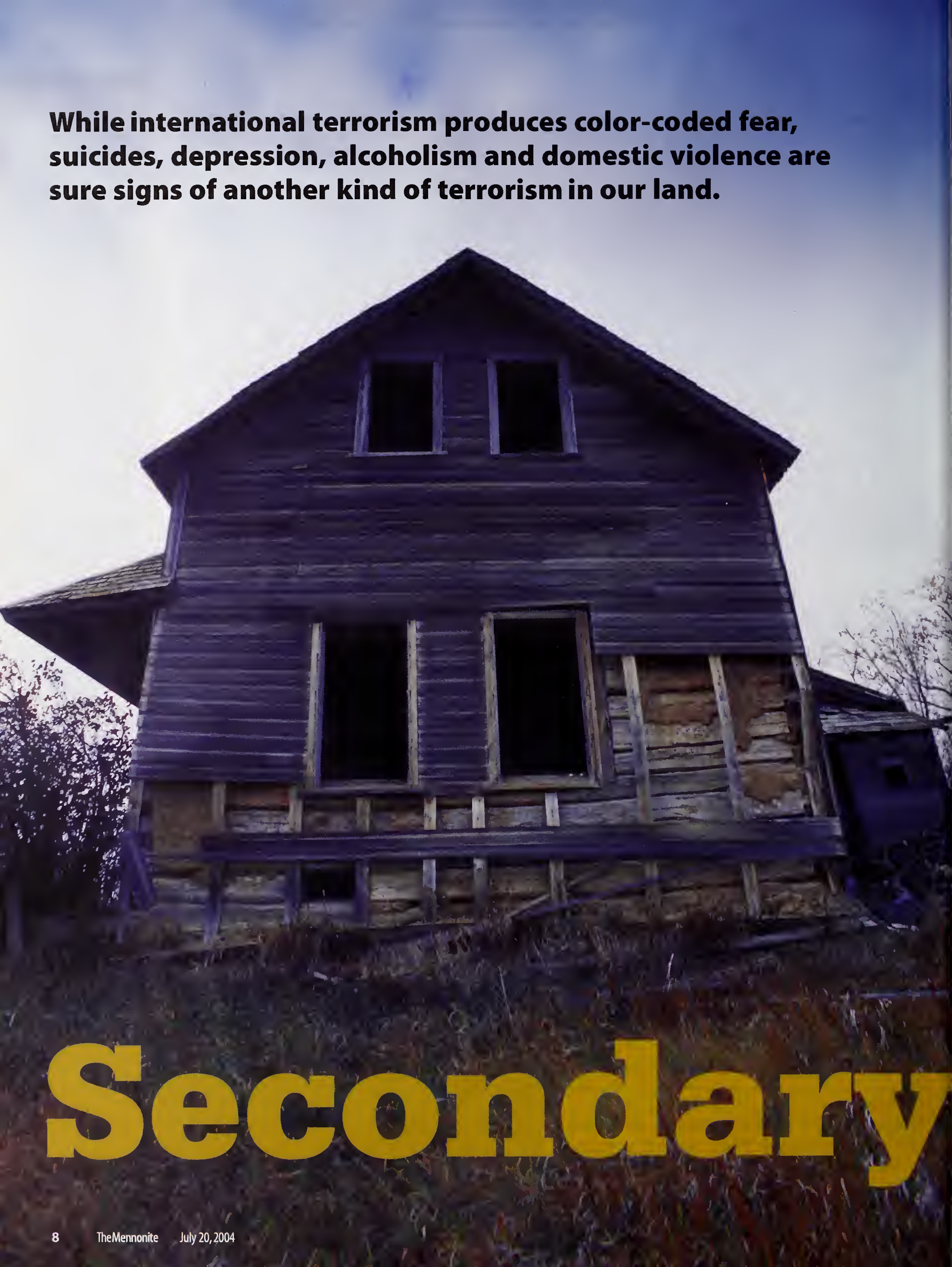
An interfaith group is buying time on Arabic-language satellite television for a 30-second spot that apologizes to Muslims for the "sinful and systemic abuses" committed at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. In the ad, a Catholic nun, a Protestant minister, a rabbi and an imam alternate reading the apology. Paid for by FaithfulAmerica.org, the ads began June 15.—*National Catholic Reporter*

U.S. Muslims decry 'senseless violence'

U.S.-based Muslim organizations have decried the beheadings in June of two foreign workers by extremists in the Middle East. The Council on American Islamic Relations condemned the "senseless violence" and said such acts do not benefit Islam or Muslim people.—*The Christian*

Christian Zionism declared 'a distortion of Scripture'

Leaders of the Reformed Church of America on June 8 declared Christian Zionism—the belief that Israel must control the Holy Land before Christ returns to Earth— "a distortion of the biblical message" and an obstacle to Middle East peace. "People are dying as a result of what we believe is a false interpretation of Scripture," said New Testament professor Jim Brownson. —*National Catholic Reporter*



While international terrorism produces color-coded fear, suicides, depression, alcoholism and domestic violence are sure signs of another kind of terrorism in our land.

Secondary

terrorism

by Dorothy Nickel Friesen

About 17 months ago, I was preparing to lead my first reference council—an all-day meeting of every member of every committee in the Western District Conference—on the prairies of Kansas. I got to the church building a bit early in order to set up the basement into tables with handouts, information sheets and other materials. Just before I went upstairs to the sanctuary to be formally installed as the new WDC conference minister, I stopped in the kitchen to get a glass of water.

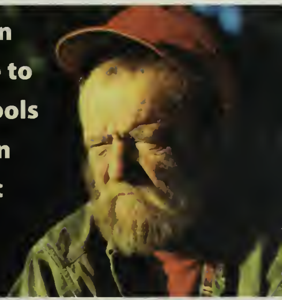
To my surprise, a woman was already working in the kitchen, arranging the goodies for our morning break, making the coffee and setting out the cups. I introduced myself to her and she said, in a sad voice, "I feel so sorry for you."

Startled, I asked for an explanation as I sipped the water.

"Well, we're all dying out here. And you have to be a conference minister in such a terrible situation. I feel so sorry for you."

I have not forgotten those shocking words. Here I was, newly arrived from a pastorate in Ohio, struggling to find my way in a new role with new people. I was eager to serve Christ yet knew the challenges were great. But death? I certainly hadn't said yes to God's call to preside over a death of the church. What was going on? Why such sadness? Why such despair?

Mennonite congregations in rural communities struggle to maintain their Sunday schools (Where have all the children gone?), pay their pastors at full-time and plan for the future.



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I now know that the depopulating of rural America is real. Some Kansas counties (and I know this is true in the Dakotas, Nebraska, Iowa, Oklahoma and other states as well) have experienced decline in population of double-digit proportions in the last two generations. Harper County in southwest Kansas, for example, has seen a drop from about 12,000 inhabitants in 1940 to about 6,500 in 2000 (U.S. bureau of the Census)—a 45 percent loss. Mennonite congregations in these rural

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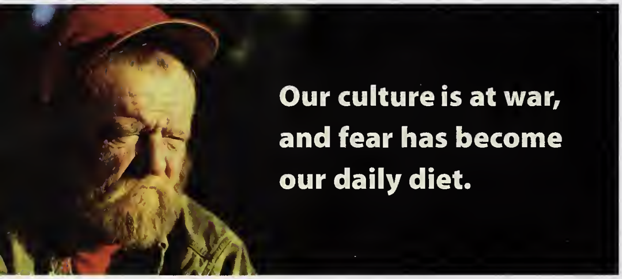
communities struggle to maintain their Sunday schools (Where have all the children gone?), pay their pastors at full-time and plan for the future. While international terrorism produces color-coded fear, suicides, depression, alcoholism and domestic violence are sure signs of another kind of terrorism in our land. The losses of livelihood, identity and a way of living are the new terrorism that grips the heartland.

Where is the church? Earlier this year, I was part of a program committee planning for our annual conference this summer. An urban representative described a death in his neighborhood of a homeless man who froze to death at a curb's edge. People walked by, stared, but did not help in any way. "How can it be that rich Americans walk by a body and do not respond? Where is the church?" he pleaded.

The stories of urban poverty are stark. The weight of rural migrations from our own land and from other lands is an enormous strain on our cities. Infrastructures are taxed; public policies are inadequate; social services are burdened. Our Mennonite congregations are giving quiet aid to the marginalized, but it seems the needs are growing and growing. While the rural communities are starved for people and economic viability, our urban communities are choked with people and limited resources.



Our culture is at war, and fear has become our daily diet.

As conference minister, I see these twin pleas and feel the direct impact of the grip of fear on our congregations. Our culture is at war, and fear has become our daily diet. I call this secondary terrorism and, like secondary smoke, this terrorism can kill and maim. Whole communities lose their ability to sustain businesses, stores, schools, hospitals and social services. Rural churches try to cope. In many cases, they do not close—they just fade away. Unable to be a factor in sustaining a community, the congregation is reduced to a small group, worrying about the future but paralyzed by macro-forces that are stealing their lives. Urban congregations develop hospitality efforts that combine worship and compassion ministries. They suffer from burnout.

Exhausted by change: Frightened by these losses and demands, pastors travel to seminars to learn new techniques in hospitality. Squeamish about controversy, leaders try to avoid difficult decisions about finances. Everyone is exhausted by change—including change in the denomination, conference and congregation.

I see pockets of hope and possibility. There are great areas of growth—in the heartland. One Kansas congregation (Grace Hill) and one Oklahoma congregation (Herold) built a brand new sanctuary and a new addition, respectively, out in the country. In Newton, Kan., two congregations (Shalom and Faith) have undertaken large building projects. First Mennonite Church in Newton has tried innovative programming and visionary leadership. Southern Hills (Topeka, Kan.) completed a large addition with an eye to community outreach. And certainly our urban congregations (Dallas, San Antonio and Houston, Texas; Boulder, Colo.; Kansas City, Kan.) are growing with compassionate ministries and peaceful witnessing to alternative ways of living.

But can we unite to be a corporate witness to the world? Can we be a denomination and area conference that works together in faith? Deep fractures between rural and urban exist. Suspicions about higher education and city or rural life fuel stereotypes. Racism is alive and well. We talk about "other" Mennonites as if they were spiritual invaders of our souls.

Terror lurks. Anxiety grips our people, and they, in turn, become less imaginative and less generous. The stock market losses in the last five years, the war, the shrinking populations, the denominational transformation and all the usual crises that face congregations have combined to create an "I'm so sorry" attitude. We need a revival of imagination and a reawakening of our faith. Surely these times are not worse than the Depression or World War II. Surely we have more resources than our ancestors had as they settled the land and built their first church buildings on the prairies and in the cities.

Letting go of fear and terror is an exercise in spiritual renewal and in congregational visioning. We need our best thinkers and our best pray-ers. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to move within individuals and in congregations. The groaning of creation is, actually, a sign of new life (Romans 8:22). Let us be part of this new creation, assisting in birthing the fruits of the Spirit.

Dorothy Nickel Friesen is conference minister for Western District Conference.

Hope out of loss

Western District Conference grieves its losses over the past several years.

by Melanie Zuercher

It's not only people who grieve losses—sometimes institutions need to do it, too. That may be the case for Western District Conference of Mennonite Church USA. At the time of denominational merger in 2002, WDC went from being the largest district in the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), with more than half the U.S. population of GCs within its borders, to being one of 21 area conferences of Mennonite Church USA.

Western District once hosted the denominational headquarters at 722 Main Street in Newton, Kan. Now 722 is one of the regional offices of Mennonite Church USA, with fewer staff and fewer familiar faces than before.

In the last two years, WDC has seen its own staff and budget shrink, with that pattern repeated in some of its "backbone" congregations.

One of those is Bethel College Mennonite Church, which has been forced to reduce pastoral staff. Has that congregation's relationship to WDC changed since merger became official in 2002?

At first glance, associate pastor Norma Johnson says, it hasn't. There is still "strong support" for programs such as Agri-Urban and institutions such as Camp Mennoscah, she says.

However, with a unified budget, the congregation is now giving less to both WDC and Mennonite Church USA, because giving overall is down.

Norma's husband, Vern Preheim, a former moderator of WDC and former GC general secretary, also says the congregation's relationship to WDC "hasn't changed substantially" in the last few years. However, he adds, "there seems to be less ownership in Mennonite Church USA than there was in the General Conference, and I'm not sure why."

Dorothy Nickel Friesen, WDC conference minister, has some ideas. She grew up in the Mountain Lake, Minn., area. She spent 16 years of her ministry in WDC—either pastoring or as an active member in churches in Manhattan and Kansas City, Kan.—before leaving the district for Indiana (Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart) and Ohio (First Mennonite Church, Bluffton) for about 14 years.

Sense of loss: When she took her current position, in January 2003, and returned to Kansas, "I was struck by the sense of loss," she says.

There seems to be less ownership in Mennonite Church USA than there was in the General Conference, and I'm not sure why.—Vern Preheim

Much of that she puts at the feet of forces much larger than WDC. "We used to hear about 'the farm crisis' in the '80s, and now people assume that's over"—but not in the Great Plains, where Western District Conference lies.

"What is really affecting us as Mennonites is depopulation in rural areas," Dorothy says. (See her article, page 8.) Traditionally strong Mennonite communities within Western District, such as Pretty Prairie, Pawnee Rock, Inman, Buhler and Goessel, Kan., and Turpin, Okla., are seeing their communities shrink as population disappears. Loss

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of population equals loss of infrastructure such as hospitals and schools, along with banks and small businesses.

"Smaller congregations feel like we have our hands full with our own survival," says Kevin Goertzen, pastor of Goessel Mennonite Church and a former WDC moderator. "It's hard enough to keep ourselves going, meet our own budget and fill our own positions."

Overall, WDC Mennonites lost their institutional connection to Canada as denominational merger moved along. "Intellectually we GCs understood the need for Mennonite Church Canada," says Dorothy. "Emotionally it's a loss and requires a grief process."

The yearly Council of Commissions meeting in Newton, which Dorothy likened to "a family gathering," became a thing of the past. Familiar names, such as Commission on Overseas Mission and Faith & Life Bookstore, disappeared.

"Ninety percent of WDC's population lives within driving distance of Newton," she says. "It feels like if Newton is not the center anymore, what is?"

Roger Neufeld Smith, current WDC moderator and co-pastor with his wife, Cynthia, of Southern Hills Mennonite Church in Topeka, Kan., sees things a bit differently.

"At 120 miles distance, it's a little less intense," he says. "Still, there are questions [in our congregation] about 'how this MC USA thing is going to turn out.'"

Along with Dorothy, however, he recognizes that "rural churches are still the backbone of WDC, especially financially," and WDC's rural congregations are aging and shrinking along with their communities.

"A lot of Mennonites in [the urban areas of] northeast Kansas originally come from central Kansas, and they know the rural churches are struggling," says Roger. "At the same time, we feel there are real opportunities for Mennonites in cities like ours.

"Will these two things equalize—will city churches pick up the slack in membership and financial giving that's being lost in rural churches? Maybe, but not yet."

Despite what sometimes looks like a bleak picture for WDC and its sister conferences in the Great Plains (which include Nebraska, the Dakotas and Minnesota, in addition to Kansas and Oklahoma), Dorothy doesn't see the future as hopeless.

Smaller congregations feel like we have our hands full with our own survival.—Kevin Goertzen

Releasing gifts: "We have a very generous God. I believe the gifts of the Spirit and more tangible gifts are present here, and I don't see any end of creativity," she says. "There is still building going on. We are still planting churches. Congregations are increasing staff, going to multiple pastors and using gifted lay leaders. We are releasing gifts that haven't been released before.

"We're not saying, 'Pity us.' We have incredible resources in Western District—spiritual, intellectual, financial, creative."

One of the strongest hopes she has is for rural and urban congregations to connect with and be resources to each other. "Their realities may be different, but at the heart, urban and rural congregations have more in common than we might think."

For example, both Kevin and Roger say they are seeing more of their respective congregations' dollars spent locally, on doing mission in the community. The difference: Goessel is focused on evangelism and outreach, while Southern Hills concentrates more on social issues such as homelessness within Topeka.

Either way, "we are taking the 'across the street' part of being a missional church very seriously," says Roger. Adds Kevin, "We don't use the word missional, but good things have come from our attempts to reach out. Maybe it's God's way of pushing us to do what God wanted all along."

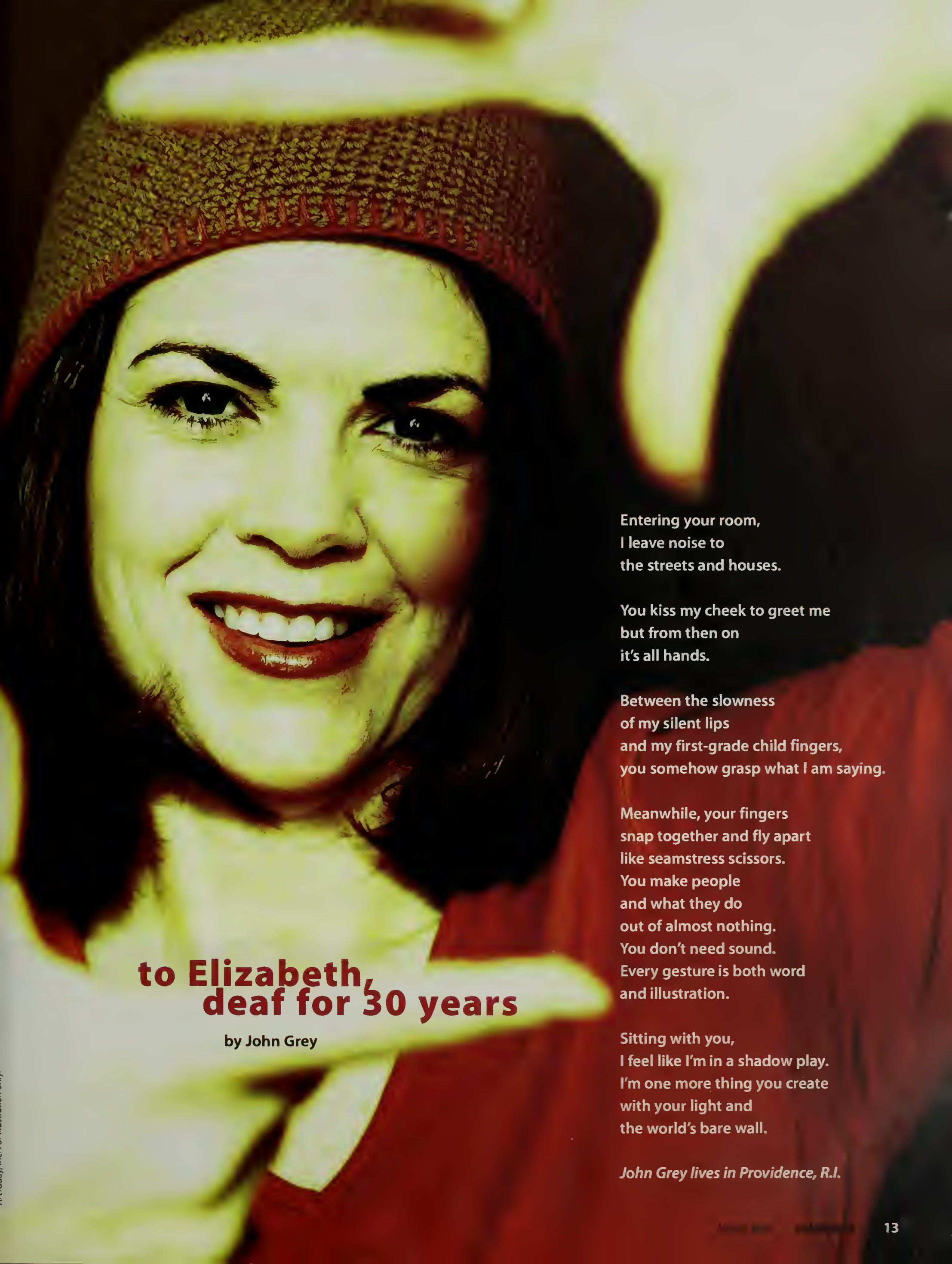
"I'm a strong advocate for interconnecting and learning from each other," says Roger. "I'm for conference, but there is a paradigm shift, from program to networking—less thinking up programs and more networking with each other on the local level."

In the meantime, however, the grieving process can't be ignored, says Dorothy. She sees part of her role as a relative newcomer to the district to name the grief and help facilitate the process.

"Grieving takes energy, but if we don't do it, we won't be able to celebrate," she says. "And unattended grief is dangerous.

"Depression and grieving make us focus on the past. Healthy grieving leads to resurrection and new life." TM

Melanie Zuercher is a member of Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.



to Elizabeth, deaf for 30 years

by John Grey

Entering your room,
I leave noise to
the streets and houses.

You kiss my cheek to greet me
but from then on
it's all hands.

Between the slowness
of my silent lips
and my first-grade child fingers,
you somehow grasp what I am saying.

Meanwhile, your fingers
snap together and fly apart
like seamstress scissors.
You make people
and what they do
out of almost nothing.
You don't need sound.
Every gesture is both word
and illustration.

Sitting with you,
I feel like I'm in a shadow play.
I'm one more thing you create
with your light and
the world's bare wall.

John Grey lives in Providence, R.I.

Countercultural worship

Our worship plans should be based not on what works but on what is faithful.

by Joseph S. Miller

the dirty little secret among pastors and worship planners is that they feel the increasing pressures of an environment that is highly competitive and even dictatorial in the self-centered attitudes of worshipers.

What congregation has not experienced conflict over worship? We debate whether to have traditional, contemporary or blended worship. Some of us have wondered if it is acceptable to have drums or dance in our worship services. Others test the waters with PowerPoint text and video clips during the pastor's sermons. Worship in North America has been caught up in a market-driven environment that seems to force worship planners into a mindset that constantly seeks to satisfy their customers. People planning worship feel like they have to compete with megachurches such as Willow Creek and Saddleback by creating fast-paced, professional worship productions that "meet the needs and wants of worshipers."

The real challenge we face is not whether we have contemporary or traditional worship. It isn't whether we have dance, drums, drama, informal liturgy or formal liturgy. These are important issues for each congregation to decide, but they are not at the heart of the challenges of worship. I believe that the real worship challenge is to resist the powers of the competitive church-market forces that

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Countercultural worship implies that when Christians gather to worship they will always be going against the stream of the popular culture, no matter what the cultural context.

Worship in North America has been caught up in a market-driven environment that seems to force worship planners into a mindset that constantly seeks to satisfy their customers.

tempt worship planners into defining worship by the criteria of "what works." When we fall into the trap of creating our worship around what we think works, we miss the much more biblically sound question, "What is faithful?" That question is answered in whether our worship describes and celebrates an alternative to the dominate cultures in which we live.

Packaging worship: Massive amounts of ink have been spilled in attempts to guide worship planners to be consumer friendly. I confess I have also been a participant in these attempts at packaging worship. I have been one of thousands of pilgrims to travel to Willow Creek to see how worship is done, with the wish that my church could at least approximate the worship of Willow Creek. This is not to say anything against Willow Creek but to confess my motivations to find a formula that will keep the high expectations of worshipers satisfied and that will attract new members.

After years of frustration at not being capable or at peace with being like Willow Creek, I am coming to the conclusion that when it comes to thinking about worship the foundational question remains not what works but what is faithful. From the biblical story and church history, what is faithful in Christian worship is always countercultural.

This does not mean that worship is done poorly or without care and love for God and the Christian community. It does not mean that worship is boring or listless. Countercultural worship implies that when Christians gather to worship they will always be going against the stream of the popular culture, no matter what the cultural context. That was true of worship in the Old Testament and it was true of the emerging worship of the first-century Christian church.

The countercultural worship I am calling for should not be confused with tired and stuffy worship from the past or with a reductionism of the gospel that uncritically conflates Christianity with the dominant culture. Some may argue that their threadbare worship is "staying true" to the good old days. Others have sold out their worship to the

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dominant culture and allowed their Christian voice to be stolen. I am advocating that worship is informed by the culture around it but takes worshipers from what is known and accepted by the larger society and moves them to discover that Jesus calls us to a radically different life, one largely out of step with the dominant culture.

Freedom: Worship that is intentionally countercultural will actually be the medium that will most authentically share the good news of Jesus Christ. Worship joyfully in contrast to the dominant culture will contain a powerful message of freedom from the way things are. Countercultural worship leads to freedom and to a wisdom that the apostle Paul said the world could not comprehend. This is the old, old story of the freedom in Christ that is good news to both the believer and unbeliever. What could be more evangelistic than worship that offers an alternative view of the world?

Christian worship and Christian communities are not at their best when trying to read the flavor du jour of popular culture and then uncritically shaping their worship and community life around the dominant culture. It is the better part of wisdom for worship planners to be aware of and knowledgeable about popular culture. But we must not be held captive by that culture. Worship planners may incorporate elements of the popular culture into worship, but always judiciously.

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Too often our worship is reduced to not much more than the least common denominator that is not much different from service clubs or a neighborhood potluck.

William H. Willimon has asked rhetorically if North Americans in our attempts to relate the gospel to contemporary culture we may have gone too far: "I have come to believe that is our weakness rather than our strength. In leaning over to speak to the modern world, I fear we may have fallen in." If worship planners begin from the premise that they are planning worship that will be countercultural, their work is reframed in ways that create opportunity to challenge and celebrate that the Holy Spirit seeks to free us from the powers and principalities of the dominant culture. When believers gather in worship that is countercultural they will be bold in being different, out of step, even odd. Being different becomes normative, and we may invite friends and neighbors to witness something unique and refreshing, worship that encourages lives that follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

Worship that is an affirmation of authentic Christian community will shape congregations into being much more than just one more socially worthwhile activity. Christian community must never be confused with something as mundane as cordiality, courtesy or sociability. Too often our worship is reduced to not much more than the least common denominator that is not much different from service clubs or a neighborhood potluck.

This out-of-step-ness will challenge and celebrate rejecting the loneliness and isolation of independence and self-reliance. Countercultural worship will challenge and celebrate worshipers actively seeking justice, an end to racism, sexism, consumerism and nationalism. Countercultural worship remembers and proclaims the power of Jesus' life, cross, resurrection and promise to return and offer eternal life. Countercultural worship challenges and celebrates that being a follower of Jesus Christ is costly. This worship challenges and celebrates that believers' first loyalty is not to the dominant culture in which they live but that they are citizens of the kingdom of God.

You will know you have experienced countercultural worship by the fruits of that worship. One of the fruits may be growth in membership. On the other hand, countercultural worship may well mean no new attenders. But the yardstick of authentic worship is not satisfied customers or new members. The bottom line is that in every age and in every culture God is doing a new thing and that God is not content with the status quo of the dominant culture or in the way things are.

Joseph S. Miller has recently moved to Lancaster, Pa, after serving as pastor of Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Associated
Mennonite
Biblical
Seminary

AMBS window

Summer 2004
Volume 14 Issue 3

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Thirty-seven receive degrees and certificates

5 **Alumni Awards honor two**

8 **!Explore welcomes 15 youth**

Discipleship, authority, reverence

Willard M. Swartley, Ph.D., retires this summer after 26 years of teaching and administration at AMBS. Through a lifetime of careful study of the Bible, Willard has shared his knowledge and insights with the church in numerous books, seminars and sermons. Excerpts of an interview between AMBS President Nelson Kraybill and Willard follow, beginning with how Willard's life came to be focused on ministry and biblical scholarship.

Willard: When I was young I thought I would be a missionary. My life was oriented toward mission churches ever since I was 14 and was active in a church plant with my brother Henry.

The mission board wanted me to get some pastoral experience, so I was pastor of Locust Grove Mennonite Church while I studied at Goshen Biblical Seminary.

The visas for Mary, my wife, and me to go to India were denied. In the meantime H.S. Bender, GBS dean, strongly encouraged me to prepare to teach and asked me to teach Greek at Goshen College.

Nelson: *How did teaching and scholarly Bible study answer your early mission impulse?*
Willard: One of the things I was drawn to in the Gospel of Mark was not only the discipleship teaching, but also the mission orientation. My book, *Mark: The Way for all Nations*, has a very strong discipleship core and a strong mission emphasis.

A theme of my teaching and scholarship was the integration of mission and peace. In 1981 when I was dean and director of the Institute of Mennonite Studies, we had a conference on what it would be like if we were to teach all of our disciplines here from a missional perspective. We used that word then already!

The manuscript I am working on now has some of the same tenor in it—a thorough study of the New Testament from a viewpoint of peacemaking. Connected with that is the mission emphasis and how that relates to theology and ethics.

Nelson: *Why have you been so keen to keep evangelism and peacemaking connected?*
Willard: I have always thought it was nonsense to separate peace and mission. Look at Isaiah 52:7. The image there of the messenger who proclaims peace is really a missional emphasis that is picked up in the New Testament. That text concludes in verse 10 by saying that all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of the Lord.

Nelson: *How does your Bible reading in your personal life differ from what you do in your scholarship?*
Willard: Life is worship and I try to frame my life and my work with the sense of worship to God. Psalm 86:11 is one of the longer-

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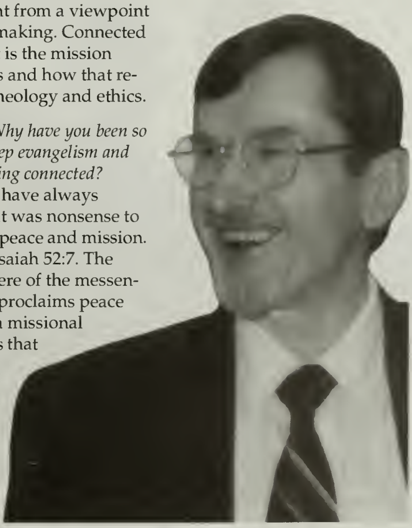


2004 Graduates

Thirty-seven earn degrees and certificates

Thirty-seven students graduated from AMBS on May 21, 2004. Eleven men and 26 women completed programs of study to receive degrees or certificates:

MDiv	Master of Divinity
MAPS	Master of Arts: Peace Studies
MATS	Master of Arts: Theological Studies
MACF	Master of Arts in Christian Formation
MAME	Master of Arts in Mission and Evangelism
Cert	Certificate in Theological Studies

Find out more about the graduates here and at the AMBS web site: www.ambs.edu.

Deron Brill Bergstresser MDiv in pastoral care and counseling. Will continue as co-pastor of Faith Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. He is married to Annette Brill Bergstresser.

Carole Boshart MACF in Christian spirituality. Exploring ministry options. She and Tim, her husband, have three children. She attends Hively Avenue Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Deanna Custar MDiv. Serves on the pastoral team of Salem Mennonite Church, Waldron, Mich., and is director of Shalom VORP and Mediation in Archbold and Bryan, Ohio. Deanna is married to Dan Custar and they have two adult sons.

Seferina Garcia DeLeón Cert. Serves on the pastoral team of Iglesia del Buen Pastor, Goshen, Ind., and as receptionist for LaCasa in Goshen. Seferina has three adult children.

Rachel Epp MDiv. Will pursue a pastoral ministry assignment and will be married this summer. Rachel is a member of Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man., and she is the daughter of AMBS alumnus Edwin Epp and Ruth Epp of Winnipeg.

Reuben Glick Shank (not pictured) MATS in theology and ethics. Anticipating a social service assignment in an area that combines peace- and justice-making and faith. He is married to Kristi Glick Shank and is a member of Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Stephen Good MAME. Will work as a volunteer with World Relief in Mozambique to develop a microenterprise ministry. Stephen and Rachel Good, his wife, have three children. He is a member of Zion Chapel, Goshen, Ind.

Rachel Nafziger Hartzler MACF in Christian spirituality. Awaiting a pastoral ministry assignment. Rachel has four children, including two daughters at home. She is a member of College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

H. Jean Hess MATS in church history and theology. Discerning future plans. Jean is married to Gale D. Hess and is a member of East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Jared Jennette MDiv. Associate pastor of Clay United Methodist Church in South Bend, Ind. Jared and DeAnn Jennette, his wife, have one child.

Gloria Jost (Not pictured) MDiv. Serves as spiritual director, labyrinth facilitator and retreat leader through her ministry, VIVERITAS Contemplative Spiritual Ministries. She also is a Christian spiritual director at the Interfaith Spiritual

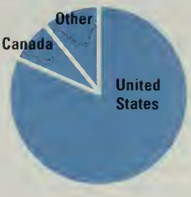
Deron Brill Bergstresser, Carole Boshart, Deanna Custar, Seferina DeLeón, Rachel Epp

Center, Portland, Ore. Gloria and Garry Jost have two children. She attends Portland Mennonite Church and St. Francis of Assisi Episcopal Church, Charbonneau.

Pamela Kay Kling (Not pictured) Cert. Will continue as Caring Ministry Coordinator at First United Methodist Church and The Life Center, and on staff at Greencroft, Goshen, Ind. Pamela and Gary Kling have two adult sons.

Anne Garber Kompaore MATS in biblical studies. Serves as a consultant to Bible translators in Burkina Faso, under the employment of Mennonite Church Canada. Anne is married to Daniel Kompaore and she has five stepchildren. She is a member of Listowel Mennonite Church, Listowel, Ont.

Countries of 2004 graduates



United States	30
Canada	3
Other	4
India: 1	
Indonesia: 1	
France: 1	
Korea: 1	

Stephen Obold Eshleman, shown with AMBS Professor Perry Yoder, is one of four 2004 graduates who became second generation AMBS graduates; his parents are alumnus Fred Obold and Ruth Obold of Hesston, Kan. Three other graduates also represent this new generation of church leaders: Elisabeth Kunjam, daughter of Shantkumar and Esther Kunjam of Rajnandgaon, India; Rachel Epp, daughter of Edwin and Ruth Epp of Winnipeg, Man.; and Laura Watt, daughter of Thomas and Sherry Watt of Muncie, Ind. This graduating class also included the grandson of a graduate: Reuben Glick Shank is the grandson of David A. Shank who earned a Bachelor of Divinity in 1952; Reuben's parents are Stephen Shank and Jean Gerber.

Stephen Good, Rachel Nafziger Hartzler, H. Jean Hess, Jared Jennette, Anne Garber Kompaore

2004 Graduates

Catherine Koziatek MDiv in pastoral care and counseling. Will become pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church, Frankfort, Ind. She is married to Steve Koziatek and is a member of Trinity United Methodist Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Elisabeth Kunjam MACF in youth ministry. Will work with youth at Bethany Mennonite Brethren Church and the Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Shamshabad, AP, India, and as a volunteer in youth ministry with the Mennonite conferences in India. Elisabeth is a member of the Mennonite Church of Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh, India. Her parents are AMBS alumnus Bishop Shant S. Kunjam and Esther Kunjam.

Jane Miller Leatherman MDiv in pastoral care and counseling. Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. Jane and Vern Leatherman, her husband, have five children. She is a member of East Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Julie Macy MACF in the teaching ministry of the church. Pursuing God's will in determining her future assignment. Julie and Kevin D. Macy, her husband, have three children. She is a member of Columbia City United Methodist Church, Columbia City, Ind.

Elizabeth Phillips McDowell MDiv. Completing a year of residency in Clinical Pastoral Education and exploring either a pastoral ministry or chaplaincy assignment. She is a member of First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio. She has four adult daughters.

Bryce Miller MDiv. Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. He is a member of Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville, Ohio.

Myrna Miller MDiv. Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. Myrna is a member of Lombard Mennonite Church, Lombard, Ill.

Aveani Moeljono MACF in worship. Exploring a ministry assignment. She is a member of GKMI Jepara, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia, and currently attends College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Amy Nissley MACF in Christian spirituality. Seeking a pastoral ministry assignment. Amy is a member of West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

Stephen Obold Eshleman MDiv in theological studies. Will pursue work in victim-offender mediation in Oregon. He is married to Christa Obold Eshleman and his parents are Ruth and AMBS alumnus Fred Obold of Hesston, Kan.

Chiou-Lang (Paulus) Pan MATS in theology and ethics. Will enter a PhD program in Intercultural Studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Chiou-Lang and Chiu-Yun Chen (Claudia) have two children. They are members of Sek-An Mennonite Church, Taipei, Taiwan, and attend Hively Avenue Mennonite Church in Elkhart.

Linda Gehman Peachey (Not pictured) MDiv. Will explore teaching opportunities and ministry in the areas of peace and justice and will continue writing assignments. Linda and Titus Peachey, her husband, have two children. She is a member of East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Catherine Koziatek, Elisabeth Kunjam, Jane Miller Leatherman, Julie Macy, Elizabeth Phillips McDowell, Bryce Miller

Alumni Awards honor two long-time church workers

The first AMBS Alumni Ministry and Service Awards honor two long-time church workers, Shantkumar S. Kunjam of Rajnandgaon, India, and John H. Neufeld of Winnipeg, Man.

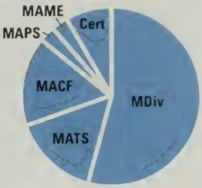
Shantkumar Kunjam (MAPS 1982) served first as pastor of a Mennonite congregation in India. He then was associate director of a theological extension education program for Union Biblical Seminary, Pune, for five years. From 1989 to 2002 he was associate director and then director of Mennonite Christian Service Fellowship of India. He was ordained as bishop in 1994. His award was presented to his daughter, Elisabeth Kunjam, a 2004 AMBS graduate, on May 21.

John Neufeld (MDiv 1969) was pastor of First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, Man., from 1969 to 1984, and was president and associate professor of practical theology at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, from 1985 to 2003. He was presented the award at First Mennonite Church on May 2, by AMBS Dean Loren L. Johns.

The AMBS Alumni Ministry and Service Award was initiated as a way to celebrate outstanding ministry and service by AMBS graduates, recognizing both distinguished accomplishment and faithful service over many years. ●

Shantkumar S. Kunjam and John H. Neufeld received the first AMBS Alumni Ministry and Service Awards.

Degrees of 2004 graduates



MDiv—Master of Divinity	**20**
MATS—Master of Arts: Theological Studies	**6**
MACF—Master of Arts in Christian Formation	**6**
MAPS—Master of Arts: Peace Studies	**1**
MAME—Master of Arts in Mission and Evangelism	**1**
Cert—Certificate in Theological Studies	**3**

Myrna Miller, Aveani Moeljono, Amy Nissley, Stephen Obold Eshleman, Chiou-Lang Pan

This year for the first time, a graduate completed the dual-degree program AMBS administers with Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Mich. Maureen Reiff-Mauzy of Warsaw, Ind., received the Master of Social Work degree from Andrews University on May 2, and the Master of Divinity degree from AMBS on May 21, completing the two degrees through the cooperative program in which requirements for field placements are shared.

Melanie Neufeld of Winnipeg, Man., also received the Master of Social Work degree from Andrews University in May. She is continuing studies at AMBS to complete the Master of Divinity degree.

The dual-degree programs provide opportunities for students to prepare for bivocational ministry and for counseling ministry that is accredited by professional organizations.

2004 Graduates

Samuel Polito MDiv. Will become pastor of Morocco First United Methodist Church in June. Sam is married to Cynthia Polito and they have one son. He is a member of Hammond Hyde Park United Methodist Church.

Maureen K. Reiff-Mauzy MDiv and a Master of Social Work from Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Mich., in a dual-degree program. Maureen plans to serve in a restorative justice ministry of healing. She is married to Terry Mauzy and is a member of Trinity United Methodist Church, Warsaw, Ind.

Mary Beth Rhine MDiv. Seeking a pastoral appointment in the West Michigan Conference of the United Methodist Church. Mary Beth is a member of Sunnyside United Methodist Church in Kalamazoo, Mich. She has two sons.

Mona Sauder MDiv. Will work at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio, where she is a member, relating to the senior members of the church and overseeing small groups. She and Jim Sauder, her husband, have three adult children.

Bradley Schmidt MATS. Will continue theological studies and enter a doctoral program in historical theology in Halle, Germany. He is a member of Hesston Inter-Mennonite Fellowship, Hesston, Kan.

Pamela S. Short MDiv. Will begin as an adjunct professor at Northwest State Community College in fall teaching world religions and is exploring possibilities for a part-time pastoral assignment. She and Peter Short, her husband, have two children. She is a member of Archbold Evangelical Mennonite

Samuel Polito, Maureen Reiff-Mauzy, Mary Beth Rhine, Mona Sauder, Bradley Schmidt

Church and she did a pastoral internship at Tedrow Mennonite Church.

Melody Steinman MDiv. Will continue studies at AMBS this fall. She is a member of Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont.

Sheiler Stokes MDiv in pastoral care and counseling. Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. Sheiler is married to James W. Stokes, Jr., and they have one son and daughter-in-law. She is a member of Bethel A.M.E. Church in Michigan City, Ind.

Thomas Thews MDiv with specialty in mission and evangelism. Will serve as pastor of a United Methodist church in northern Indiana and will prepare for commissioning in the United Methodist Church in 2005. Tom and Linda J. Thews have one son. He is a member of Jamestown United Methodist Church, Elkhart.

Kathleen Thompson (Not pictured) Cert. Will continue as a licensed part-time pastor in the United Methodist Church. She and Brad Thompson, her husband, have two daughters. She is a member of Altarstar United Methodist Church, Auburn, Ind.

Zachary J. Walton (Not pictured) MATS in theology and ethics. Will begin a doctoral program in speech communication at Southern Illinois University. Zach and Karen Bontrager will be married July 31 at First Mennonite Church in Bluffton, Ohio, where he is a member.

Laura Watt (Not pictured) MAPS. Continue work as the director of East Side West Side, an inner-city youth program at West Central Neighborhood Ministry in Fort Wayne, Ind. Laura is the daughter of AMBS alumnus Thomas Watt and Sherry Watt of Muncie, Ind. ●

Live by call, not by choice

In his commencement message titled , "We do not lose heart," James Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, compared the job of pastor to that of serving on the crew of a ship. Jesus is the captain and the Holy Spirit is the navigator, he explained, and the pastor is a member of the crew who is called to shinny up the main mast to the crow's nest—a special place of vision.

"The reason we do not lose heart is that we look at what cannot be seen," the 1973 AMBS graduate continued. "I find the great irony of pastoral ministry is that you are sent up to the crow's nest to declare what you see on the horizon, but the most profound declaration is not what is visible; it is the hopes and dreams of God's heart for all of creation and all of humanity through Jesus Christ."

Jim challenged the graduates to live by call and not by choice. "I believe it is only by call and almost never by choice that God grants us this mysterious thing called vocation."

Then, referring to the Apostle Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 4, he concluded, "It is because of God's mercy that we have been given this ministry. If you believe that, and stay close to that, you will never lose heart." ●

Pamela Short, Melody Steinman, Sheiler Stokes, Thomas Thews

Discipleship, authority, reverence

(continued from page 1)

Willard Swartley, shown here in 1983, graduated from Goshen Biblical Seminary in 1962 and earned a Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1973. He taught at Goshen College, Eastern Mennonite College and Seminary, Conrad Grebel College and AMBS. His numerous books and articles include *Slavery, Sabbath, War, and Women; Israel's Scripture Traditions and the Synoptic Gospels: Story Shaping Story;* and *The Meaning of Peace.*

standing themes for my way of cultivating my spirituality: "Teach me thy way, O Lord, that I may walk in thy truth. Give me an undivided heart to revere thy name." The *way* is discipleship, the *truth* is authority, and *revering the name* is worship.

Nelson: *What is your hope for AMBS in the next generation?*
Willard: That AMBS will fulfill the vision of Psalm 86:11: upholding discipleship, authority of the scriptural truth, and reverence and worship of God. To continue in that path is the heart of our mission. ●

To see a longer version of this interview, go to www.ambs.edu. Enter "AMBS Window" in the search box.

Next Generation campaign

Next Generation, the fund-raising effort AMBS announced in December 2003, is progressing toward the goal. Here is an update; to find out more, see **www.ambs.edu/NextGeneration.**

	Goal	Received 5.31.04
AMBS Fund	$ 5,800,000	$5,646,873
Library and campus center	6,300,000	3,422,633
Chapel renovation	1,100,000	19,400
Preaching laboratory	170,000	177,200
Church Leadership Center	2,800,000	2,299,536
Scholarships	2,330,000	1,325,648
Endowed faculty chairs	1,500,000	1,156,508
Other		648,639
Total	**$20,000,000**	**14,696,437** **73.5%**

!Explore program welcomes 15 youth

Fifteen high school students or recent graduates will participate in the first summer sessions of !Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth, July 15–August 1.

!explore
A Theological Program for High School Youth

Jessica Andrews, Parkview Mennonite Church, Kokomo, Ind.
Amanda Arbour, Oxford Circle Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, Pa.
Janie Beck, Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio
Thomas Epp, Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man.
Whitney Fast, Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan.
C.J. Hague, College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.
Carolyn Klassen, First United Mennonite Church, Vancouver, B.C.
Peter Koontz. Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.
Sae-Chan Lee, Hively Avenue Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.
Jeff Metcalfe, Community Mennonite Fellowship, Drayton, Ont.
Gabrielle Plenert, Home Street Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man.
David Roberts, Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Neb.
Kelly Shenk, Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship, Goshen, Ind.
Kristen Swartley, Cedar Falls Mennonite Church, Cedar Falls, Iowa
Julia Zehr, Scottdale Mennonite Church, Scottdale, Pa.

Alumni News

Lillian Elias, Master of Divinity 1999, was ordained May 23 at Parkview Mennonite Church, Kokomo, Ind., where she and Jacob Elias, AMBS professor of New Testament, serve as pastors.

Pauline Steinmann, Master of Divinity 2001, was ordained June 6 at Wildwood Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, Sask.

Chris Marshall, Master of Arts: Peace Studies 1996, was given an International Community Justice Award from the British Home Office for his work in promoting restorative justice. The award was presented by Princess Anne.

Naomi Lloyd, Master of Arts: Theological Studies 1995, has received a scholarship for her Ph.D. studies at the University of British Columbia.

Will Stoltz, Master of Divinity 1979, has concluded 19 years of prison ministry as chaplain with the Ministry of Public Safety and Security in Ontario.

Summer 2004
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The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor and Designer: Mary E. Klassen
Photos: Graduate groups–Steve Echols; others–Mary E. Klassen

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Pastor's death shocks church

Steven Francisco served as coordinator for Mennonite Youth Convention.

by Laurie L. Oswald

Right up until he died suddenly of surgery complications July 6, Steven Francisco, 45, a longtime leader at Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Va., was doing God's work—including planting a new multiracial church.

Francisco served as associate pastor with his brother, Bishop Leslie Francisco III, senior pastor at Calvary, until the end of 2003, when he launched Calvary Community West in Isle of Wight County. His wife, Karla Francisco (see box), also a pastor, and a church-planting team also joined him. The new congregation—where about 40 to 50 people attend on Sundays—is one of several started by Calvary Community in the last several years.

In an interview June 21, the couple said they were shaping Calvary West into a multicultural and multiracial congregation. They wanted to help Calvary Community realize its dream of reaching out to all people and to help Mennonite Church USA be an antiracist denomination.

"Our church-planting team of five couples has been committed right from the start in developing a multiracial congregation, because it's awfully hard to become that kind of church if the group started out with other roots," he said. "So we've worked hard to use a blended worship style that includes not only gospel songs that the African-American community is familiar with but also contemporary worship music of all styles. It's been really challenging for us to work this way, since Karla and I grew up in predominantly African-American communities. ... But so far in our new church, three white families are worshiping with us, and they've been such a blessing."

Steven said the only way a multicultural congregation can form is if the pastors and the team are willing to make changes and to pray to tear down long-held racism. But he also felt God doesn't force people to be open to all cultures and racial groups.

He won't help that dream become reality in the years ahead. But Kenyetta Aduma, director of Intercultural Relations for Mennonite Church USA and a member of Calvary, says she believes he laid a good foundation for the ministry to continue to flourish. She also believes that his wife and the church-planting team are gifted to carry the vision forward, if God leads.

Steven became engaged in the wider church when he coordinated the youth convention for the former Mennonite Church and the former General Conference Mennonite Church at Nashville 2001.

"We hired [in 1998] Steven to replace Carlos Romero as coordinator for Mennonite Youth Convention," says Everett J. Thomas, who served as president of Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries in the 1990s. "We needed someone who understood the needs of mass worship services and could carry out creative ideas emerging from a multicultural and multiracial group. Steven worked with large groups at Calvary and was a very pleasant and personable leader. He was a wonderful leader. This is a great loss for the church."

Laurie L. Oswald

Steven Francisco, associate pastor at Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Va., and initiator of a recent church plant, with Karla, holding their youngest daughter, Taylor, in a photo taken June 21 at the new meeting house. The Francisco family also includes another daughter and a son.

He was a wonderful leader. This is a great loss for the church. —Everett J. Thomas

Laurie L. Oswald is director of Mennonite Church USA News Service.

'A liaison to heaven': excerpts from July 10 'homecoming'

God said to me, "My daughter, when people die and they go to heaven, they're not just sitting around like people think, in a resting place. There's a lot of work going on in heaven to make things happen on the earth. Your husband is a liaison to heaven."

God reminded me of what Jesus said to his disciples, "The least shall be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." I got excited because I knew that Steven was the least on this earth. There is not a person I know more humble. He was the humblest man of all. I knew right away that Steven had an exalted position in heaven.

We've got a liaison in heaven. And he's on the job. Steven has gone on; he has been promoted to a higher calling. Steven was a totally selfless man. He was a 'dead man walking,' because he 'died to self' every day.

He's been promoted to a higher calling. Steven loved something new. He loved change. I know he's having a ball with this new thing. I want you (Calvary Community Church) to be comforted, knowing that Steven has gone on to a higher calling.—*Karla Francisco*

New identity in a larger pond

James Schrag is executive director for the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board.

I was cochair of the joint planning committee for the first joint assembly of Mennonite Church members (MCs) and General Conference Mennonite Church members (GCs) in Bethlehem, Pa., in 1983. I shared that role with Myron Augsburger, then the past moderator of the Mennonite Church. As a 37-year-old pastor, being matched with a seasoned church leader and college president in coleadership demonstrated differences of approach to leadership selection among MCs and GCs of that time.

Twenty years later, in 2003, the first assembly of Mennonite Church USA gathered in Atlanta. Since Bethlehem '83, the process of becoming one new church had required four more joint assemblies—in Normal, Ill. (1989), Wichita, Kan. (1995), St. Louis (1999) and Nashville, Tenn. (2001).

From the perspective of history, it will probably take another 20-year-process to finish the merger in terms of new hearts and minds and in the development of a long-term identity and calling. Identity in congregations is still linked to the DNA of the former churches.

It will probably take another 20-year-process to finish the merger in terms of new hearts and minds and in the development of a long-term identity and calling.

Two dominant cultures: For the present, we observe two dominant cultures in Mennonite Church USA—the former MC culture and the Anglo culture. About 70 percent of the membership is formerly MC, 20 percent GC, and 10 percent dually affiliated members. About 75 percent are Anglo (Germanic and "Russian" Mennonites with other whites), and 25 percent come from a broad spectrum of racial-ethnic people (African-Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asians and a growing number of immigrants.)

An unexpected feeling of being smaller in the new church is shared by some former GCs and by some racial-ethnic people. Subgroupings of these two groups were big fish in smaller ponds in the former churches. Now for some former GCs, the pond feels larger, meaning they are no longer among the dominant group in either religious heritage or holding majorities in churchwide decisions. Racial-ethnic groups may confess to similar feelings, their origins coming mostly from among former MCs. For them, merger with GCs seemed to create even larger Anglo proportions in the new church. Thus the feeling of being smaller in the new church can be shared by both some former GCs and by some racial-ethnic peoples but for different reasons.

Power and prerogative: Perceptions of changed reality raise new and uncomfortable questions about power and prerogative. Questions of belonging can surface for those who may now feel smaller in a new matrix of peoples.

Is Mennonite Church USA, as it develops in the next 20 years, a "melting pot," following the lead of American history, where the unwritten expectation is assimilation of all groups into the dominant culture? Or will our new church embrace a style of long-term diversity that is countercultural when compared with the prevailing expectations of the American social milieu?

I doubt our grandchildren will observe an either/or answer to these questions 20 years from now, if, indeed, they will even be interested in asking such questions. Just as I observed a mixing of leadership appointment and style more than 20 years ago in the joint committee that produced Bethlehem '83, a similar mixing of cultures will continue to shape who we are as Mennonite Church USA. But with the inevitable creative-adaptive process that accompanies the mixing of histories and cultures, the next 20 years may also require efforts to protect many of the distinctive contributions of subgroups who today may feel smaller within Mennonite Church USA.

Perhaps the focus for our future identity is set by the challenge of Scripture to see things from more than a human point of view—"With us therefore worldly standards have ceased to count in our estimate of any man; even if once they counted in our understanding of Christ, they do so now no longer. When anyone is united to Christ, there is a new world; the old order has gone, and a new order has already begun" (2 Corinthians 5:16-17 NEB). Whether we feel larger or smaller in our new church, we are assured that God is working in Christ to make all things new (Revelation 21:5). TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **I pledge allegiance to Jesus Christ**—J. Nelson Kraybill
- **Defining what's real**—Earl Zimmerman

Mennonite World Conference leaders Larry and Eleanor Miller (foreground) join other Mennonite and Reformed worshipers in Grossmunster Cathedral at the reconciliation conference June 26 in Zurich, Switzerland.

John Sharp

Forgiveness for sins nearly 500 years old

Grossmunster Cathedral site of Reformed-Mennonite reconciliation conference

Christians from the Zwinglian Reform tradition and the Anabaptist global church confessed sins that separated them 500 years ago and extended forgiveness to each other at an event called "remarkable and memorable." Settings for the Reformed-Anabaptist Reconciliation Conference were the Grossmunster and nearby Limmat River in the city of Zurich, Switzerland, on June 26.

Throughout the day, some 400 people, representing four continents and the two traditions, took steps toward new understanding of what drove them apart and new relationships as brothers and sisters with a common vision.

In 1525, Ulrich Zwingli preached against the radical Anabaptists from the pulpit in the Grossmunster. Anabaptists were hunted, persecuted, exiled and killed. Zurich authorities ordered the drowning of Felix Manz, one of their earliest leaders, in the nearby Limmat River in 1527.

In 2004, Larry Miller, executive secretary of Mennonite World Conference, preached from Zwingli's pulpit to both Reformed and Anabaptist Christians. Miller commended the Reformed Church for being willing to revisit the convictions of the Anabaptists and to take steps "toward fuller communion with former adversaries."

Confessions and responses from representatives of each group, both during the afternoon worship service in the old church and at an evening ceremony at the Limmat River, were among the conference's most moving moments. Reudi Reich, president of the Reformed Church of the Canton of Zurich, read a statement of regret for the persecution of the early Anabaptists during the worship service. In response, Ernest Geiser, president of the Council of Elders of the Swiss Mennonite Church, said, "Descendants of the formerly persecuted Anabaptists among you today no longer see themselves as victims. ... We accept your confession with a spirit of forgiveness.—*Ferne Burkhardt of MWC News Service*

Peter Detwiller (left) of the Reformed Church of Zurich and James Landis of Petersburg, W. Va., by the Limmat River marker commemorating the martyrdom of Landis' ancestor Hans Landis

John Sharp

The 'way of tea' teaches mission worker

Beyler: "Japan has … living models of the ideal Christian community."

> **In tea ceremony, one is by turn the one who serves and then the one being served. Precedence of group over individual is something I am still learning.**
> —Mary Beyler

During conversation in a sushi shop, Yoko Aratani remembered her first encounter with Mary Beyler nearly 30 years ago. Aratani arrived home from school one day and saw Beyler sitting at the far end of her family's low table. Even though Beyler was not yet able to sit seiza-style, Beyler's presence so impressed Aratani that she later had her mother sew her a blouse just like the one Beyler was wearing that day.

Since then, Beyler has learned to sit with her legs folded under her seiza-style, a formal position of respect.

"Yoko and I are sisters in the faith as well as friends," Mennonite Mission Network's Beyler says. "The sushi shop encounter serves as a reminder of the blessing of long-term ministry that gives meaning to and makes possible such long-term relationships."

Beyler went to Japan in 1974 to teach at an American school in Tokyo. The Aratanis were one of three families from the Yuai Mennonite Church in Sapporo who hosted Beyler during her first year's summer holidays as she studied Japanese.

From that first encounter as students, Aratani and Beyler have both become teachers. Aratani teaches university English at the Kitami Institute of Technology.

Beyler's ministry includes extensive travel as she teaches Bible courses and church music, preaches in Mennonite congregations and serves on several Japan Mennonite Christian Church Conference committees. Beyler also invests quality time in nurturing her ever-widening circle of friends, both inside and outside the church.

Mary Beyler (second from right) participates in a traditional tea ceremony.

Mennonite Mission Network

Learning to live in Japanese culture has deeply enriched Beyler's personal spiritual pilgrimage.

"I went to Japan a head-centered, logically inclined mathematics teacher," Beyler said. "The Japanese worldview was a major reorientation for me. [In Japan] I discovered a world with which I had an unexplainable affinity, a place where I felt somehow comfortable despite always being foreign."

Beyler learned that her ministry resonated more fully with her Japanese neighbors when it flowed from her heart rather than from her head. She turned to a Japanese art, "the way of tea," to practice living from the heart.

"It was through tea ceremony that I first learned how to slow down and begin dealing with the compulsive busyness, perfectionism and competitiveness of my life, and through tea ceremony that I received training in appropriate ways of doing ministry in Japan," Beyler writes in *Tea Ceremony as My Training for Ministry in Japan*, published in 2000.

According to Beyler, to participate in Japanese arts is a lifetime endeavor—an embarking on a journey that never finishes. A way of tea student learns by practicing in the presence of a teacher over the course of years.

"[The way of tea] takes time to be naturally assimilated through repetition, and the whole body, not just the head, must learn it. So, too, should it be our Christian faith."

Parallels between the way of tea and the Christian way exist in the master-disciple relationship, the lifetime nature of discipleship and the expectations of growing toward spiritual and social maturity.

"In tea ceremony, one is by turn the one who serves and then the one being served. Precedence of group over individual is something I am still learning," Beyler says.

"Not only in tea ceremony but also in the everyday life of our congregation, I am being taught how to give in and to let go of positions that may be legitimate but are only individual, for the sake of the oneness of the group. Japan has provided me with the living models of the ideal Christian community in which the question is not, 'What should I do?' but, 'What should we do?'

"The way of tea fosters generosity and sharing that rivals the caring I also find in the Christian community," she says. "[It] provides a haven where I am not a foreigner but just a person, a place where I am accepted and where I can witness to my Christian faith openly and naturally—not something to be taken for granted in Japan."—*Lynda Hollinger-Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network News Service*

YES volunteer works with Wales youth

"They were curious about Jesus and what made me different," says Knepper.

Greta Knepper first went to Wales in 1998 as part of a Youth Evangelism Service (YES) team. She left a piece of her heart there. So when an invitation came from Temple Baptist Church in Pontypridd, Wales, for her to return as a youth worker, she didn't hesitate to sign up for a year-long mission internship with Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM). The one year stretched into three.

She began by working with the church youth but was also burdened for unchurched youth. She wrestled to bridge the gap between the churched and the unchurched youth and eventually began to hold separate events.

One evening she stepped out and invited unchurched teens from "the Graig," an unusually tough part of the town, to come for a club. Temple Baptist has a history of passion for the Graig youth and children and had held clubs for many years.

"I didn't think they'd come," Knepper says of the Graig teens she had invited. "But they did. They thought I was a freak. Was I for real? The kids were energetic and not respectful. But they were curious about Jesus and what made me different."

Eventually God opened the door for Knepper to actually live up on the Graig, where her home became a handy drop-in spot for youth.

The clubs, times for activities like baking, games, songs and "God chats," eventually grew into an Alpha group, a program of study about Jesus designed for the unchurched.

"They were hungry and their attention span was amazing," Knepper says. "Yet there was a hardness among them. They're so close, but few break through to new life in Christ."

Knepper says that as she wrestled in prayer for the youth God assured her that "on this rock I will build my church." Later she learned that "Graig" is the Welsh word for rock.

Now back in the United States, Knepper continues to correspond with young people from Wales.

"My aunt is going to jail for drug dealing," one youth recently wrote, "My dad's best friend just hung himself. … I'm very depressed and hitting the booze."

"I don't know what God is doing," Knepper says. "There is such darkness. The light of Christ is so needed. The church hasn't seen much fruit."

Since returning from Wales, Knepper, of Williamsport, Md., is serving as a training assistant at the Harrisburg (Pa.) Discipleship Center.—*Jewel Showalter of EMM News Service*

Dale D. Gehman

Greta Knepper spent three years as youth leader at Temple Baptist Church in Pontypridd, Wales, "hanging out" with churched and unchurched kids.

Seven-year old program 'maxed out'

Eastern Mennonite Missions training program profits from global alliance.

Seven years ago, Youth Evangelism Service (YES), a discipleship and mission training program of Eastern Mennonite Missions, became a founding member of an emerging discipleship mission network called the Global Discipleship Training (GDT) Alliance.

Based in Lancaster, Pa., the GDT Alliance began small by networking existing programs such as YES with other similar programs from believers' churches around the world.

Almost immediately, YES began to partner with two training programs in North America and Europe—which have since become full members of the Alliance. Then YES moved on to partner with five new candidate programs—this time from Nepal, Brazil, the Philippines, Zambia and Central Asia.

Mike Gingerich, who heads the YES program for Eastern Mennonite Missions and serves as member chair of the GDT Alliance, says YES is pleasantly "maxed out" with partner programs. He finds this multiplication of globally minded workers invigorating.

"With these partnerships, we're getting workers to locations we could never reach with just the YES program," he says.

"There are far more requests for partnering than we can fill. Difficult new areas are being reached through the witness of students in these partner programs."—*Eastern Mennonite Mission News Service*

MEDA

A homebound Pakistani woman spinning

Program breaks monopolistic practices

MEDA effort connects confined women embroiderers to middle-class market.

In North America, gathering data on new clothing styles can be as simple as switching on the television or taking a stroll through a mall. Not so for homebound women embroiderers in rural Pakistan. Confined by culture to their homes, it's not easy to connect with the industry or keep up with styles that command a good price.

A new three-year Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) project hopes to change that isolation for 6,000 women in rural Pakistan by bringing the outside market to them. It will help the women with product design and commercial access so they can target higher-value markets. The work will be concentrated in three conservative areas of rural Pakistan, where home confinement ranges from 50 to 95 percent. Most of the women are illiterate. All are very poor.

"Women in these areas are known for the high quality of their embroidery, but products are generally sold into low-value traditional markets through monopolistic buying channels," says Linda Jones, project director.

"Confined women do not have the knowledge or opportunity to develop products for alternative markets. At the same time, there is a growing middle class of Pakistani women in urban centers who seek out quality hand-embroidered garments in contemporary styles and are willing to pay a premium for them."

MEDA's strategy is to expand and replicate a new business model that uses mobile women sales agents who deal directly with rural embroiderers and provide an important production-marketing link.—*Wally Kroeker of MEDA News Service*

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MCC worker teaches entrepreneurial skills

Eighty-four Summer Services workers help youth work in their communities.

When Shirelle Venable finished high school, she dreamed of going to college, becoming a doctor and escaping the rough Harrisburg, Pa., neighborhoods where she'd grown up. But a boyfriend persuaded her to stay. When the nail salon she opened took off, Venable's plans for education were put aside for 13 years.

Today, Venable is a college senior majoring in theology and a Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Summer Service worker. In a neighborhood much like the one she grew up in, she shares her story—urging teenagers to chase their dreams.

Eighty-four Summer Service workers are serving from California to Virginia and Florida. The program helps young people of color work with a church or agency in their own community for 10 weeks during the summer.

At The Mix at Arbor Place in south Lancaster, Venable helps with classes for the Bright Summer Creative Learning Program, shares devotionals at a nightly meal for teenagers and helps with the girls' programs.

"We try to show them that there's more and not to settle for what they're in now but to reach for the stars," Venable says. "You can be your own entrepreneur. You can own a factory."

MCC photo by Joel Fath

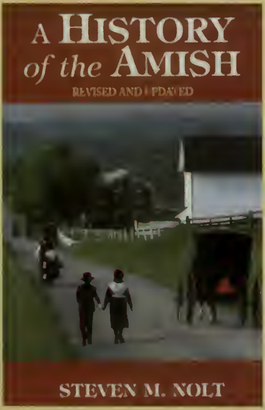
Shirelle Venable (right) and Duane Worthy make a sale at the snack shop at Arbor Place in Lancaster, Pa. Venable created the store and is helping run it as an Mennonite Central Committee Summer Service worker.

All that we do, God is in it.
—Shirelle Venable

Venable still guides youth through what is required on-site for a business. Venable also stresses the spiritual aspect of being accountable and faithful as an employee.

"All that we do, God is in it," she says.—*Marla Pierson Lester of MCC News Service*

A Classic – Newly Revised and Updated



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WORKERS

Heusinkveld, David, ended June 20 as pastor at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind.

Luitjens, Nathan, was licensed and installed June 27 as pastor at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa.

Mason, Chad, was licensed June 19 as pastor at Christ Community Church, Des Moines, Iowa.

McDougal, Kent, was licensed June 19 as pastor at Christ Community Church, Des Moines, Iowa.

Nebel, Grant, was licensed June 13 as associate minister at Washington (Iowa) Mennonite Church.

Zook, Darrell, began July 1 as pastor at Pulaski (Iowa) Mennonite Church.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bender, Madelyn Noel, June 16, to Kelby and Leanne McNeil Bender, Kalona, Iowa.

Bethune, Rheagan Elizabeth, June 10, to Craig and Danielle Friesen Bethune, York, Neb.

Blosser, Joelle Marie, June 2, to Philip and Donna Moyer Blosser, Sellersville, Pa.

Gehman, Jackson Eugene, April 28, to Rodney and Jodi Miller Gehman, Kalona, Iowa.

Hilgenfeld, Lily Katherine, June 17, to Brian and Michelle Stuart Hilgenfeld, Shawnee, Kan.

Kauffman, Lauren Renee, June 29, to Travis Kauffman and Kristin Graber, Goshen, Ind.

King, Cierra Gabrielle, June 15, to Matt and Jennifer Koehn King, Wichita, Kan.

King, Grace Marie, May 7, to James and Angel King, Bellefontaine, Ohio.

Lacher, Ethan Samuel, June 25, to Mark and Katherine Carson Lacher, Doylestown, Pa.

Meyer, Henry Frederick Yoder, May 27, to Tom and Erika Yoder Meyer, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Miedel, Sarah Elizabeth (Sadie), June 2, to Anson and Hannah Miedel, Philadelphia.

Miller, Brynn Avery, June 26, to Matt and Michelle Loss Miller, Iowa City, Iowa.

Miller, Cory Austin, June 11, to Karlton and Carol Yutzy Miller, Hutchinson, Kan.

Miller, Gavin Reese, June 3, to Steve and Sandra Rolon Miller, Goshen, Ind.

Newman, Kambel Scout, June 3, to Steve and Kris Pankratz Newman, Collierville, Tenn.

Nolt, Benjamin Riley, April 21, to Kent and Melanie Souder Nolt, East Earl, Pa.

Nolt, Dylan Ryan, June 21, to Chadwick and Valerie Carmen Nolt, Mt. Joy, Pa.

Neufeld, Evan Graber, June 22, to Doug and Cristina Graber Neufeld, Harrisonburg, Va.

Piatote, Twyla Byram, June 13, to Scott and Beth Hege Piatote, Eugene, Ore.

Prochno, Joelle Rose, May 28, to Dale and Connie Miller Prochno, Nappanee, Ind.

Reihs, Savannah Marie, May 16, to Jeff and Christy Warrington Reihs, Haven, Kan.

Reeser, Nathan Henry Wyse, May 25, to Scott and Angie Wyse Reeser, Madison, Wis.

Rhodes, Miriam Elizabeth, June 19, to Jason and Laura Lehman Rhodes, Harrisonburg, Va.

Sawatzky, Silas Roth, June 8, to David and Rachel Roth Sawatzky, Atlanta, Ga.

Short, Marianne Joy, May 27, to Tim and Missy Thomas Short, Wadsworth, Ohio.

Starr, Jacob Raymond David, June 24, to Ray and Ann Dayton Starr, Lansdale, Pa.

Warnick, Drew Landis, May 30, to Derek and Renne Warnick, Philadelphia.

Youngzwirble, Mae Katherine, June 16, to Walter Linde-Zwirble and Kim Stauffer, Sellersville, Pa.

Youssef, Savannah Jolene, June 17, to Gideon and Karen Bond Youssef, Colmar, Pa.

Zacharias, Kaitlyn Faith, June 4, to Sheldon and Andrea Penner Zacharias, Altona, Man.

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MARRIAGES

Cellar/Early: Joe Cellar, Powell, Ohio, and Leslie Early, Bellefontaine, Ohio, May 29.

Flora/Meck: Holly Flora, Shawnee, Okla., and Ryan Meck, Akron, Pa., June 12 at Donegal Presbyterian Church, Mt. Joy, Pa.

Hunsberger/Shaffer: Lydia Kate Hunsberger, Davidsville, Pa., and Kirby Alan Shaffer, Holsopple, Pa., June 27 in an outdoor ceremony, Friedens, Pa.

Loeppky/Toews: Greg Leoppky, Altona, Man., and Margaret Toews, Gretna, Man., May 22 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man.

Newman/Webb: Joe Newman and Jill Webb, West Liberty, Ohio, June 6 at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

Nutt/Yoder: Dorothy Nutt, Urbana, Ohio, and Harvey Yoder, West Liberty, Ohio, June 12 at South Union Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

Sutter/Young: Mark Sutter, Wooster, Ohio, and Michelle Young, May 7 at Evaline Lutheran Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.

DEATHS

Alderfer, Wellington C., 84, Harleysville, Pa., died June 5. Spouse: Sara D. Landes Alderfer (deceased). Parents: Jacob M. and Mary N. Clemens Alderfer. Children: James, Rebecca Scheetz; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Memorial service: June 9 at Salford (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Becker, Janet, 48, Kinzers, Pa., died June 11. Spouse: Merle Becker. Children: Apryl, Angela, Jonathan. Funeral: June 15 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

Brubaker, Ruth G., 82, Lititz, Pa., died June 20. Parents: Jacob S. and Anna Mae Brubaker. Funeral: June 24 at Landis Valley Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Buckwalter, Albert S., 82, Goshen, Ind., died May 12. Spouse: Lois Litwiller Buckwalter. Parents: Earl and Florida Rose Shank Buckwalter. Children: Rachel Miller, Naomi, Tim, Steve; five grandchildren. Funeral: May 15 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Cressman, Horace, 86, Kitchener, Ont., died June 1. Spouse: Mary Shantz Cressman (deceased). Parents: Alson and Barbara Randall Cressman. Children: Elaine Weber, Mark, Brenda Snider, Mary Jane Guerin; 12 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 5 at Breslau (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Doby, Jerome, 66, Topeka, Kan., died June 10 of a heart attack. Spouse: Jocelyn Graber Doby. Parents: Herman and Madeline Montgomery Doby. Children: Jerry, Terri L. Williams, Lori A., Tiffany D. Kirk, Justinn E., Chaz Graber-Doby, Carlos, Rico, Nathan; 12 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 15 at Mount Carmel Missionary Baptist Church, Topeka.

Douple, Harriet A., 60, Ephrata, Pa., died June 7. Spouse: R. Kent Douple. Parents: Harry and Edith Kilhefner. Children: Steven, Elizabeth Berg. Memorial service: June 13 at Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Fleck, Chalmers H., 89, Grabill, Ind., died May 6. Spouse: Margaret (Meg) Lengacher Fleck. Parents: William and Ines Friend Fleck. Children: Kate S. Crosby, Roxanne F. Wilson; four grandchildren. Funeral: May 11 at D.O. McComb and Sons Funeral Home (First Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne).

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Funk, Tina, 78, Altona, Man., died June 9. Spouse: (1st) Jacob W. Nickel (deceased), (2nd) Edwin H. Funk (deceased). Parents: Jacob H. and Kornelia Wiebe Falk. Children: Dennis, Lorna Driedger, Allan, Wanda Enns; seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 13 at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Gerbrandt, Ben, 66, Toronto, Ont., died May 17. Parents: John J. and Maria Gerbrandt. Memorial Service: May 24 at Altona (Man.) Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Graber, Abe, 62, Goshen, Ind., died June 21 of a heart attack. Spouse: Carolyn Weaver Graber. Parents: John and Margaret Swartzentruber Graber. Children: Tim, Terry, Tammy Miller; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: June 24 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Gunden, Cleland, 84, Milford, Ind., died May 8. Spouse: Myra Roeschley Gunden. Parents: C.J. and Agnes Albrecht Gunden. Children: Rosemary Widmer, Alice Bender, Tom, Philip; 11 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 11 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Harder, Jacob W., 86, Mountain Lake, Minn., died June 22 of cancer. Spouse: Estella Loewen Harder. Parents: Jacob J. and Anna Janzen Harder. Children: Karen Barkman, Jane Goering, Grace Kratovil, Jacob S.; 15 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Memorial service: June 27 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake.

Hilborn, M. Edna Shantz, 86, New Hamburg, Ont., died April 21. Spouse: Rae Hilborn. Parents: Bishop B. Benjamin and Myra Snyder Shantz. Children: Carol, Jean, Mary, Dan; two grandchildren. Funeral: April 24 at Nith Valley Mennonite Church, New Hamburg.

Hofstetter, LaVerne, 81, Dalton, Ohio, died June 6. Spouse: June Hofstetter. Parents: John C. and Hulda Hofstetter. Children: Larry, Molly Bowman; one step-grandchild; one step-great-grandchild. Funeral: June 9 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Hoover, Joseph R., 70, Fort Wayne, Ind., died June 2 of cardiac arrest. Spouse: Elizabeth Souder Hoover. Parents: Warren and Nettie Martin Hoover. Children: Albert, Lisa Hnath, Tina Dahlseid; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: June 5 at D.O. McComb and Sons Funeral Home (First Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne).

Johns, Ruth Mast, 94, Walnut Creek, Ohio, died June 4. Spouse: Daniel A. Johns (deceased). Parents: David and Ada Kennel Mast. Children: Joe, Priscilla Nielson, Nancy Souder, Anna Marie Baker, Christine Stehman; 12 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 10 at Martin's Creek Mennonite Church, Millersburg, Ohio.

Klippenstein, Susan, 92, Altona, Man., died May 15. Spouse: (1st) Abram W. Friesen (deceased), (2nd) Cornelius D. Klippenstein (deceased), (3rd) Henry A. Klippenstein (deceased). Parents: Abram J. and Helena Harder Friesen. Children: Lawrence, Alfred, Raymond, Alvin, Delores Dyck; 39 grandchildren; 57 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 20 at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our online forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

- Editor@TheMennonite.org
- fax 574-535-6050
- 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794

Martin, Paul B., 81, Kinzers, Pa., died June 13. Spouse: Arlene Denlinger Martin (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Mary Benner Martin. Children: Linda Martin Nolt, Glenn, Vernon; seven grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 19 at Hershey Mennonite Church, Kinzers.

McGuire, Roger, 71, Morton, Ill., died April 28. Spouse: Lavonne McGuire. Children: Jim, Jerry, Susan, Sally Evans; 17 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 3 at First Mennonite Church, Morton.

Miller, Atlee, 95, Hartville, Ohio, died June 13. Spouse: Mary Emma Miller (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Mattie Miller. Children: Lois Jones, James Ray; six grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: June 18 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Niles, Edna Brenneman, 90, Kalona, Iowa, died June 26. Spouse: Eauve L. Niles (deceased). Parents: Irwin and Mattie Miller Brenneman. Funeral: June 29 at Kalona (Iowa) Mennonite Church.

Noe, Reva Ulrich, 91, Chenoa, Ill., died June 14 of heart failure. Spouse: Wilbur Noe (deceased). Parents: Christian and Elizabeth Schertz Ulrich. Child: Shirley Kramer; two grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 16 at Duffy-Pils Memorial Home, Chenoa.

Rempel, Arlene Friesen, 71, Henderson, Neb., died June 27 of cancer. Spouse: Walter Rempel. Parents: Pete O. and Helen Bergen Friesen. Children: Joyce Friesen, Carol Janzen, LaVerne, Connie Friesen, Lynette Jost; 14 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 30 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Schertz, Betty Lewis, 78, Atlanta, Ga., died May 25 of congestive heart failure and multiple myeloma. Spouse: Vernon Schertz. Parents: Ernest and Irene Bruder Lewis. Children: Vera, Irene, Stephen, Susan, Eric; 14 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Memorial service: May 30 at Berea Mennonite Church, Atlanta, Ga.

Schertz, Russell Henry, 92, Goshen, Ind., died May 14. Spouse: Lois Mae Schertz. Parents: Henry R. and Martha Imhoff Schertz. Children: Deloss E., Dean W., Elaine; five grandchildren. Funeral: May 17 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Showalter, M. Virginia, 81, Hesston, Kan., died June 20. Funeral: June 23 at Schowalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Souder, Robert Ruth, 51, Sunbury, Pa., died June 7. Parents: Robert N. and Marian Souder. Child: Mandy Souder; one grandchild. Funeral: June 12 at Boyer Mennonite Church, Middleburg, Pa.

Swartzendruber, Emily Slaby, 93, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 5, 2003. Spouse: Jacob F. Swartzendruber (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Mary Nohejl Slaby. Children: Shirley Roth, Sanford C., five grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 10 at Meetinghouse at Greencroft, Goshen.

Yoder, Henry E., 75, Goshen, Ind., died June 16. Spouse: Esther Eash Yoder. Parents: Edward and Annie Beachy Yoder. Children: Rachel, Kathleen Holsopple, Roger; nine grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 19 at East Goshen Mennonite Church.

Yost, R. John, 91, Narvon, Pa., died June 8. Spouse: Verna Stoltzfus Yost (deceased). Parents: John and Kate Kennel Yost. Children: John, Wilmer, Glenn, Frank, Vernon, Nancy Yost Eberly; 26 grandchildren; 38 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 12 at Old Road Mennonite Church, Gap, Pa.

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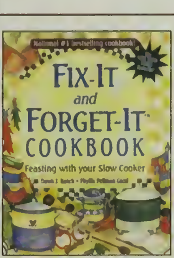
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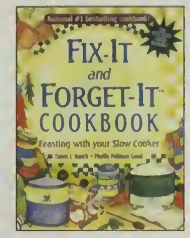
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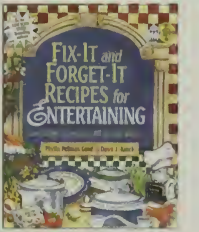
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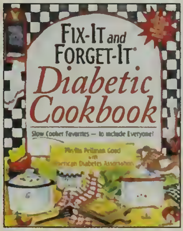
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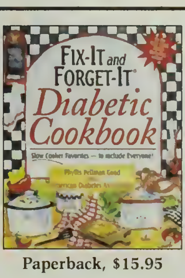
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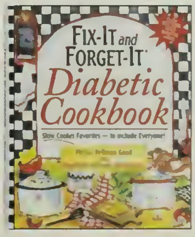
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MATTHEW 25:35-36
I was hungry and you gave me food,
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I was naked and you gave me clothing,
I was sick and you took care of me,
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LISTENING
with our HEARTS

Mennonite Central Committee Annual Report 2003/2004

MCC worker Rebecca Spurrier (right) talks with Nadya Serdyuk, a resident of the Dolina Home for the Elderly, in the Ukraine. In response to community needs, women from Kutuzovka Mennonite Church have organized an MCC-supported "mercy group." They visit people who are elderly, sick or bedridden.

LISTENING
with our HEARTS

South Hutchinson Mennonite Church is expanding its pastoral staff team to meet the needs of a growing congregation. We are seeking people gifted, trained and/or experienced in one or more of the following areas: ***children's ministries, Christian education and discipleship training, worship ministry, small group ministries and lay leadership development.*** People interested should submit credentials to Search Committee, SHMC, 808 S. Poplar, South Hutchinson, KS 67505, or shmcoffice@shmc-online.net.

West Clinton Mennonite Church, located in rural northwest Ohio, seeking full-time ***associate pastor.*** Responsibilities include half-time with youth and young adults. For further information contact Marv Leatherman at 419-335-2221 or leather@bright.net.

Warwick River Christian School, a growing Mennonite sponsored school with 350 students from K3 thru G8, is seeking one or two people for positions of ***administrator and/or director of development.*** A vision for Christ-centered education and relevant experience in education, administration and/or development is required. Contact Danni Clark, 252 Lucas Creek Rd., Newport News, VA 23602; or clarkdd@Juno.com.

Spanish Jubilee Sunday *school* materials are now available at reduced prices. Also available is ***Centered Teaching,*** a supplement for adapting Jubilee to broadly-graded groups. To order, call Faith & Life Resources: 800-245-7894. Find Spanish materials pricing and a sample session of *Centered Teaching* at www.jubileeonline.org.

Full-time position available at **Mennonite Financial**'s Ephrata, Pa., branch. Primary responsibilities include business development and consumer and small-business lending. Mennonite Financial is a credit union that serves the Anabaptist community in the United States.

Contact Sandy Hershey at 800-451-5719, ext. 172; email sandy@mennonitefinancial.com.

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Oaklawn Psychiatric Center has an immediate opening for a ***social worker*** at our outpatient center in Elkhart, Ind., to provide therapy for children, adolescents and their families. Rich clinical environment that is supported by interdisciplinary team staffings. Master's degree in social work required. License or eligibility for licensure preferred.

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Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community seeks ***director of supportive living.*** Position summary: This position serves as the leader of the supportive living area of operation, administrator-of-record for nursing care and assisted living. Ensures that operational and administrative management complies with all applicable standards, regulations and policies. Will establish vision. Coordinates planning, implementation and evaluation to ensure high-level quality of care, fiscal efficiency and accountability, and resident satisfaction. Works collaboratively with VMRC management to encourage and establish sound system delivery that supports the mission of Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community.

Position requirements: Baccalaureate degree from accredited college or university in the field of health services administration, human services, gerontology or nursing, with a valid Virginia nursing home administrator's license. Master's degree in business, health administration or related field preferred. Minimum five years proven knowledge and experience in management, staff development, supervision, program innovation and development within a long-term-care setting (skilled nursing/assisted living). Able to work in multilevel retirement system. Strong interpersonal skills to work collaboratively with staff, residents and constituency. Ability to innovate, manage conflict and process change.

Qualified applicants send cover letter and resumé by July 23 to Director of Human Resources, 1501 Virginia Ave., Harrisonburg, VA 22802. Or apply online at www.vmrc.org. Fax 540-564-3700; Kathleen J. Coulter, Director of Human Resources, Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, 1501 Virginia Ave., Harrisonburg, VA 22802; 540-564-3402.

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—Bruce Springsteen, "Human Touch"

Gordon Houser

Like it or not, we live in an information age, one that prizes knowledge of facts and the speed of obtaining that knowledge. But, as Quentin J. Schultze writes, "Our insatiable desire for information results in moral confusion, not virtue."

Habits of the High-Tech Heart: Living Virtuously in the Information Age (BakerAcademic, 2002, $16.99) faces this reality squarely and looks at the consequences of our high-tech habits. "Unless we cultivate virtuous character with as much energy and enthusiasm as we pursue cyber-technologies," Schultze warns, "our technological mindedness and habits will further unravel the moral fabric of society." He calls us to reflect on the habits we've developed and develop new ones.

Schultze is no Luddite. He's not against using cyber-technologies. He simply wants us to think about their use and what they are doing to our humanity. Unfortunately, "North Americans are largely unreflective, voracious consumers of cyber-novelty and informational trivia." His book can help us with the reflecting we need to do.

Six habits: Schultze not only outlines the problems we face but looks at six habits we will need to develop to deal with this problem: discernment, moderation, wisdom, humility, authenticity and diversity. To develop these habits, he says, requires "organic community life." A key word here is "organic," since "online communities are typically little more than interest groups, demographic colonies or what historian Daniel J. Boorstin calls 'consumption communities.'" We need to be with people we can see and touch, in "places where we seek the common good even while respecting our individual and tribal differences."

Cyber-technology can be a wonderful tool for helping us communicate with others, but it can also serve to separate us from others, enslave us in our own worlds of consumerism. "To the degree that we can revive organic forms of community marked by neighborliness," Schultze writes, "we can protect cyberspace from the ravages of heartless egos run amok."

Organic community: Churches, perhaps especially Mennonite churches, can play an important role in developing organic community, face-to-face relationships that include a diversity of people and voices. Only such communities can help us resist the isolation and divisiveness that cyber-technology tends to lead its users into.

Virtues develop out of practices over a period of time. Our fast-paced mediaculture leaves us increasingly hurried and anxious. Trying to keep up with the latest information or newest gadgets breeds frustration. If we want to find peace and truth, we will need to learn such virtues as discernment, moderation, wisdom, humility, authenticity and diversity. Yet "we cannot become more virtuous unless we are honest with ourselves about our own tendencies and limitations."

This is where our Christian faith is so helpful. It teaches us that truth will set us free, that nothing is greater than love. Unless we are grounded in such teaching and practices, "we will continue to be swept up in the winds of inauthentic propaganda and the waves of brokered consumer desires."

Ignorance may not be bliss, but knowing too much can be dangerous if such knowledge is mere information about the latest stock prices, sports scores or news bulletins and does not include knowing who we are and whose we are. "We are not designed as mere informational beings but as moral creatures who can pursue virtue."

Learning such habits, such virtues, makes us more human, more the image-bearers God created us to be. Becoming more virtuous also helps create better communities, which lead to healthier societies, to a better world, where all God's creatures can share in God's shalom.

FILMS

The Terminal (PG-13) is a parable of a Jesus-like figure (Tom Hanks) who is trapped in an airport terminal after a coup in his home country leaves him without a visa. While the implausibilities mount, so do the laughs as the Hanks character befriends airport workers and angers the man in charge of security, who wants him gone. Hanks captures the strength and innocence of a man who exhibits patience, the chief virtue of peacemakers.

Fahrenheit 9/11 (R), Michael Moore's documentary, takes his expected shots at President Bush and may not be seen by Moore's antagonists, which is too bad, since they'll miss the scenes of a Michigan mother whose son is killed in Iraq. Her anguish—and that of an Iraqi mother who lost loved ones to a U.S. bomb—is powerful for any audience.

BOOKS

Anabaptist-Mennonite Confessions of Faith: The Development of a Tradition by Karl Koop (Pandora Press and Herald Press, 2004, $22 Cdn.) argues that a coherent Anabaptist-Mennonite theological tradition exists and can help Mennonite churches better understand their identity. While the book is geared toward specialists, the final chapter is especially useful to lay readers.

Whose Religion Is Christianity? The Gospel Beyond the West by Lamin Sanneh (Eerdmans, 2003, $12) uses a question-and-answer format to consider the rise of what Sanneh calls "world Christianity," a religion that comes from local cultural contexts and challenges assumptions held by Western Christianity. Sanneh is a scholarly, wise and irenic conversation partner.

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Everett J. Thomas

Loss of place

If a congregation's identity is linked closely to a church institution, the congregation's fate can be subject to the life of that institution. Such is the case with congregational life in Scottdale, Pa., and for some congregations in Newton and North Newton, Kan. These congregations deserve special attention from Mennonite Church USA.

The stories of two congregations in Scottdale, Pa., were the subject of a June 1 article by Daniel Hertzler ("The Two Shall Become One"). Hertzler described the recent merger of the only Mennonite congregations in Scottdale; the new congregation is now called Scottdale Mennonite Church.

He also explained why the former congregations—each thriving in its own part of town—declined in size until each needed to pool resources. In their prime, both had many members working for Mennonite Publishing House (MPH).

"But trouble waited in the wings," Hertzler said of the mid-1990s, when many longtime congregational members retired and moved away. "The trouble was exacerbated by the dismemberment of MPH, a shock to the entire Mennonite community."

Hertzler concluded his article by describing the realities that now face Mennonite families remaining in Scottdale.

Some of these congregations survived and grew significantly because of the church institutions nearby.

"One congregation and MPH reduced to a shadow of its former self," Hertzler said. "What was once a noisy, pulsing building is now almost as silent as a mausoleum."

But these former Mennonite Church (MC) congregations are not the only churches to suffer from contraction by a denominational institution. Bethel College Mennonite Church in North Newton, Kan., for example, is experiencing changes linked to the end of General Conference Mennonite Church (GC). This congregation does not relate to the new denomination in the same way.

"There seems to be less ownership in Mennonite Church USA than there was in the General Conference," says former GC moderator Vern Preheim in an article we commissioned by freelance writer Melanie Zuercher (page 11).

A pattern of institutional contraction—similar to what Hertzler described for Scottdale—has emerged for congregations in central Kansas; these contractions have taken a toll on Western District Conference (WDC). Zuercher's article describes the loss of "place" suffered by Bethel College Mennonite Church and other congregations in the Newton and North Newton area.

"In the last two years," Zuercher says, "WDC has seen its staff and budget shrink, with that pattern repeated in some of its 'backbone' congregations."

Zuercher links these contractions to the merger of General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church into Mennonite Church USA. Newton and North Newton—small towns separated by a railroad track but determined to keep distinct identities—served as a center of General Conference Mennonite Church.

But now the building at 722 Main Street in Newton no longer is the center of churchwide activities that had a family-gathering quality during each annual "council of commissions."

"Ninety percent of WDC's population lives within driving distance of Newton," says WDC conference minister Dorothy Nickel Friesen (page 12). "It feels like if Newton is not the center anymore, what is?"

Not much can be done about the loss being experienced by our sisters and brothers in Scottdale and central Kansas. However, we can be aware of their pain. Some of these congregations survived and grew significantly because church institutions established their towns as denominational centers.

But therein lies the conundrum: Church institutions need healthy congregations nearby to provide worshiping communities for their workers. But when those same institutions diminish or disappear, real congregations with real people are left behind to adjust to new realities.

By featuring the stories of the congregations in Scottdale and central Kansas, we hope the wider church will become aware of their struggles. We bless these congregations to discover God's purposes in the realities thrust upon them.—*ejt*

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August 3, 2004

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A 'disencounter' and an encounter

Gilberto Flores serves as director of leadership development and denominational minister for Mennonite Church USA. He served 25 years as a pastor and church planter in Guatemala, Honduras and Texas.

Mark 7:24-30 narrates the drama of a "disencounter" that emphasizes separation and the breaking up of human relations and the role of faith that converts the disencounter into an encounter. When I refer to faith, I am not speaking of something purely conceptual but of a profound spiritual force that empowers the soul to identify new ways to live together and share the values of a different life.

The disencounter: We have here two people from different backgrounds. One is a Jewish rabbi, the other a Syrophoenician woman. The disencounter occurs because in the face of the woman's plea, a wall of racial or ethnic difference and the priorities through which Jesus defines his focus and mission, is erected. First, he says, I must attend to my own and serve those of my own race and lineage. Using strong words, he says the children must be given food first, and then, if anything remains, it can be given to the dogs. There seems to be no space for a constructive act or better ways of communication. Jesus, the one who represents the majority in this story, defines with his argument the acceptable rules of the game. The woman is aware of this condition. Like others of the region, she is a Gentile without rights. She has no power, no access to the spheres of influence, and represents a people that is unacceptable. Her marginality is evident.

How marvelous is faith! The sudden change on the part of Jesus takes place when the woman makes use of something only God can place in the depth of the soul, something not associated with race or geography or acquired by ancient scrolls of an ancestral religion: faith. It is only made manifest in the lives of those who do not claim any privilege and who recognize their limitations. They see themselves as dependent on the mercy of God and, on this foundation, ask to be heard and served. The use of the epithet "dogs" is not important.

Dogs are also God's creatures and have the right for food and care. Faith in the case of the woman prompts her to question the usual argument that some people have rights and others do not. She demands on the basis of her faith that she be treated correctly. This demand affirms the validity of her personhood and confronts the error common to the society of that time about status. She was asking for something that God the Father of all considers good and just. It is not important which portion may be mine, but I ask for it because I have the right to have it.

To have faith from a Christian perspective is to have power to move the worthless rubble of a culture of separation and division. Paul assures us that by faith we can call on the things that are not as though they were. This has to do with the ability to wait in hope, even when it seems impossible. It is faith that makes us respond to God. And it pleases God when we have faith.

The encounter: After a conversation like this, shall we maintain the disencounter? Is the human hunger for reconciliation and renewal to be prolonged? Jesus is the Reconciler, the giver of peace, the bearer of the announcement of a new and better era. Jesus, the Son of God, is the way toward a different level of relations between humans. All the orders of life are affected by his coming and the good news it carries. His reply is eloquent and agreeable: "Go, the demon has left your daughter." The woman's response affirms in Jesus the reason for his mission. That mission has to do with the reconciling encounter that should occur each day with God, ourselves and others. The disencounter leads to a prodigious encounter.

Jesus said that in the festival of the kingdom all are welcome and there is room at the table for everyone. May the Mennonite Church work diligently so there is a place at the table for all the cultures and ethnic groups sheltered in the United States under the name Mennonite. TM

TheMennonite

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Mennonite Church USA

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Women of faith

Thank you for including the stories of "Women of Faith" (July 6) who have dedicated their lives to the service of others in the name of Christ. Their stories need to be heard. And bravo to you, Linda Witmer and Janet Breneman.

My husband and I had the great privilege of serving with these remarkable women in Guatemala. Their lives have truly inspired us and many others.—*Jenn Esbenshade, New Holland, Pa.*

Teach nonresistance, not pacifism

The lack of a military draft should not lull us to sleep. We must renew teaching nonresistance to our constituents. We should not take part in violence or act like there is none.

Many pacifists are not Christians. Some are pacifists in given circumstances but not in others. Anabaptist beliefs and the practice of nonresistance are not identical with pacifism. The only reason for "nonresistance" is a personal relationship with our Savior Jesus Christ and discipleship as citizens of Christ's kingdom while here in this world.

We believe God has given the nations of this world the authority to use capital punishment and other violent force to deal with the wickedness of mankind but that he has called his followers to have no part in that. We are to testify to the message of the gospel: Be reconciled to God and to each other. In doing so we should rather be killed than to kill. The gospel is more than nonresistance. Telling the unregenerate to act like Christians doesn't work.—*R.J. Hoover, Goshen, Ind.*

Taxes pay for war

After World War II, a Jewish rabbi in Germany said what shocked him most was not the terror of the Nazis but the silence of the good people in Germany. Today what disturbs me more than the horrendous atrocities of presidents Bush, Clinton and the U.S. Empire for many decades is how most U.S. peace activists, progressives, Quakers, Mennonites and members of Amnesty International pay U.S. federal income tax for these atrocities: to rob, terrorize, blind, cripple, paralyze, make homeless and murder our sisters and brothers worldwide. We get what we pay for.

Nothing in life is more important than refusing to pay federal income tax for war—no matter who is president. The best way to refuse to pay federal income tax for war, with no fines and no threats from the IRS, is to live simply under the taxable level. The federal income taxable level for 2004 for a single person who is under 65 and not blind is $7,950. I lived all of 2003 on $3,390—less than half the federal income taxable level.

I have no right to pay tax to do to other people what I do not want them to do to me. I have paid no federal income tax for 25 years. I pledge now, at age 58, to live simply, to own no car and to pay no federal income tax for war for the rest of my life. This is nonviolent revolution.—*Don Schrader, Albuquerque, N.M.*

God can speak through labyrinths

The day before I received the July 6 issue of *The Mennonite* I walked—for the first time—the labyrinth at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, which is a short distance from my home. It was a beautiful experience. So I was surprised at the negative comments in one of the letters in Readers Say ("Labyrinths").

I was wondering about a personal decision that day. Walking the labyrinth showed me again the way God leads us: I knew where I was going, but couldn't see ahead how I would get there. I could see the path, and it was plain to follow, but I could see ahead only a few steps at a time. The path might turn and twist, but all I had to do was follow it. There were unexpected pleasures (beautiful wildflowers) along the way. I thank God for this experience. God could speak to others through this kind of prayerful walk.—*Marian E. Hostetler, Elkhart, Ind.*

Books reveal disparity

As a part of our East African tour before Mennonite World Conference in Zimbabwe last summer, we visited a rural Tanzanian church. It was a delightful day with great hospitality shown to us in food and school children's presentations. The pastor of the church proudly showed us his small office with desk and three well-used books: a Bible, a hymnal and a devotional book. I was greatly humbled as I thought about my six bookshelves full of books in my church office.

Of all the disparities between the first and third worlds that I observed, the accessibility to books struck me as one of the greatest inequalities. As a

IN THIS ISSUE

Three provocative articles approach the prophetic in this issue. J. Nelson Kraybill (page 8) calls us to ponder the wisdom of saying the Pledge of Allegiance and offers an alternate "Christian pledge of allegiance." Earl Zimmerman (page 12) describes the perils of preaching like Jesus did—as recorded by Luke—and says, "Few of us have the imagination or courage to preach like that." Dan Krehbiel (page 16) challenges us "to be radicals again" and warns that "our efforts to 'resolve' or 'transform conflict' … actually work against the biblical vision of social justice because we do not take into account one important thing: power."—*Editors* result of this encounter, I have moved to purchasing fewer books, using the library, sending books abroad (through the Books Abroad Program in Goshen, Ind.) and sharing the books I own in a Summer Book Exchange at church.—*Patty Friesen, Minneapolis, Minn.*

Not anti-Semitic

Re our news release ("Passion Opens Doors in Middle East," June 1) about the reception Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* has received from Muslims in the Middle East: Ryan Algrim (Readers Say, July 6) said that Mennonite Mission Network workers were "gleeful that a movie is proselytizing through anti-Semitism." That characterization seriously misrepresents their attitude regarding the dynamics involved.

In no way do Mission Network workers condone anti-Semitism in this film or anywhere else. In reporting on the Muslim reaction to *The Passion*, they were noting the ironic fact that many Muslims go to the film because they've heard Jewish critics don't like it. But instead of having that anti-Semitism confirmed, they hear a message from Jesus about loving and praying for your enemies, which is the antithesis of anti-Semitism.

Because the film portrays Jesus in a way that is very different from how the Islamic tradition views him, it has the potential to make Muslims curious about Jesus, perhaps even consider following him. If that happens, it will be the result of a faith journey that did not bless anti-Semitism but transformed it.—*John Yoder, director of communications, Mennonite Mission Network*

Looking for relatives

My parents and grandparents immigrated to the United States from Russia between 1912 and 1925. They were of the Mennonite faith. But my friends in Georgia, Pennsylvania and Ohio all seemed to give me the cold shoulder and said if they didn't come to America in the 1700s then they couldn't possibly be Amish or Mennonite. I felt so shut out and separated and not quite acceptable. Does anyone in your reading area know of or have relatives who came to America from Russia during this time? Most documented immigrants went to North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Missouri and Montana. Our family members are from northern Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota.—*Mary Ann Wiegel Nolan, Nicholls, Ga.*

Prayers for the wrong things

Re the use of the word "missional" for Mennonite Church USA: It just wasn't needed. God's church doesn't need tricky phrases or catchy words. For several years I've been thinking of God's work as shown in his Word.

It seems to me we are inclined to want to do what God says is his to do, such as convict others of sin. Then on the other hand what God tells us to do, we pray to him and ask him to do it instead. The next prayers you overhear, think about what they are asking God to do and you'll see that most of the requests in the prayer are acts God has told us to do.

God's tasks and ours are not the same. We need to be careful to do what God wants us to do and in his way and time.—*Paul Kauffman Sr., Harrisonburg, Va.*

Status of parents

Since you insist on including the births, deaths and marriages section (For the Record), why do you not care about the life or death status of the parents of the person who died? You mention if the spouse and/or children are deceased, but parental status is open. If they're important to mention, then their status of life or death is also important.—*William and Deborah Knickerbocker, Brattlebora, Vt.*

Editor's note: Several months ago we decided to no longer list the life or death status of the parents of the deceased. Since many of those whose obituaries are listed in For the Record are quite elderly, we believe that information may be unnecessary.

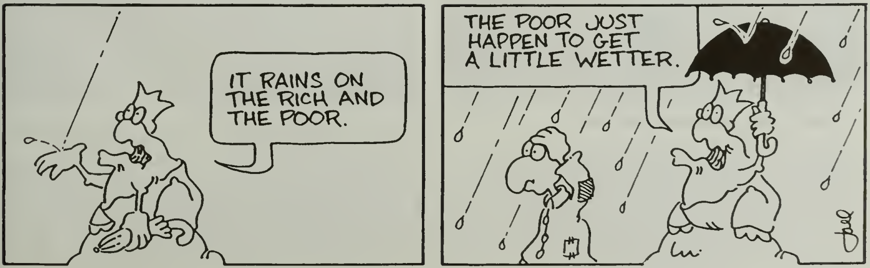
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

In Mennonite Church USA in the future, ordination will be:

- ○ More open to women (62%)
- ○ Less open to women (11%)
- ○ It depends on the area (23%)
- ○ Not sure (4%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


IT RAINS ON THE RICH AND THE POOR.
THE POOR JUST HAPPEN TO GET A LITTLE WETTER.

IN BRIEF

Paul Voegtlin, longtime minister in Alberta, dies

Longtime Mennonite pastor Paul Voegtlin, 83, died June 14. His funeral was held at Salem Mennonite Church near Tofield, Alta., where he was first ordained a minister in 1944 and first served as pastor. In 1973 he became pastor of Edson (Alta.) Mennonite Church, where he served until his retirement. He also served as conference minister for Northwest Conference of the Mennonite Church.

U.S. perceptions about weapons do not match reality

According to the Program on International Policy Attitudes, which released a survey in March of U.S. public perception regarding weapons of mass destruction, Americans think the United States has 200 nuclear weapons ready to be used on short notice. The actual number is closer to 6,000 active strategic warheads, more than 2,000 of them on high alert. The survey also indicates that Americans prioritize arms control over capturing Osama bin Laden. While 92 percent favor giving international inspectors the power to examine biological research in all countries, 74 percent incorrectly assume the U.S. government also favors inspections. Sixty-five percent said it is not necessary to develop new types of nuclear weapons. *—Sojourners*

Cheyenne church celebrates centennial

BUSBY, Mont.—White River Cheyenne Mennonite Church celebrated its centennial here May 28-30.

The congregation, which changed its name from Bethany to White River in 1976, pioneered Mennonite mission work among Northern Cheyenne. Its founding a century ago followed the establishment of Mennonite mission outposts among Oklahoma's Arapaho and Cheyenne in 1880 and Arizona's Hopi in 1893.

Today the 57-member congregation continues to work to overcome the perception that Christianity is a white people's religion, said Willis Busenitz, White River's pastor. "Christ was not a white person," Busenitz said at the celebration. "He came into a setting that was more like Cheyenne than European. He came to all people for all people."

About 150 people attended the celebration, with the theme "100 Years: Honoring God for His Faithfulness, Goodness and Love."*—Ellen Bradshaw in* Mennonite Weekly Review

MCC photo provided by Donald Bacher

Oregon children raise money for Laos

Jessica Dilbone, 8, left, and Stephanie Dilbone, 6, hold posters showing how their children's Sunday school assembly at Albany (Ore.) Mennonite Church marked progress toward purchasing two wells and pumps for a Mennonite Central Committee project in Laos. Some 20 children, from age 3 to fifth grade, are part of the Sunday school assembly that adopted a project to help install wells in Laos.

EMM photo by Dale D. Gehman

One life, one block at a time

Carrie Nofziger, one of four young adults on a YES team, is with neighbor Ahmina Meldium at a block party in Waterbury, Conn. They were there to assist church planters Winston and Ingrid Gordon at Beacon of Light Community Church.

Hesston student finally returns to Indonesia

HESSTON, Kan.—Nathan Gunawan, from the city of Pati, in Central Java, had to wait more than 18 months to return home because of deportation proceedings scheduled for July 19. Fortunately, due to the termination of the case July 9 by the U.S. immigration judge in Kansas City, Mo., Gunawan was able to go home.

The immigration hearing resulted from Gunawan's detention last year because his student visa papers were declared "out of status." He was detained March 13, 2003, by the Border Patrol at a routine checkpoint at Sarita, Texas, and held six days at the U.S. Immigration Services Processing Center in Port Isabel, Texas.

The incident occurred while the Hesston College Chorale, of which Gunawan was a member, was on a spring break tour in Texas and Oklahoma.

While the deportation proceedings were pending, Gunawan was not permitted to leave the country. That means he hadn't seen his family since December 2002, just before he began his studies at Hesston in January 2003.*—Hesston College News Service*

Goshen recognized as a college of distinction

GOSHEN, Ind.—Goshen College has been recognized as a College of Distinction, adding to its list of honors, which includes rankings in *U.S.News & World Report*'s "America's Best Colleges" edition and Barron's Best Buys in Education.

By invitation from Student Horizons Inc.—an organization formed in 2001 by a group of concerned parents, educators and admission professionals to help good high school students come together with colleges that specialize in undergraduate teaching—Goshen College was added to the list in 2004.—*Goshen College News Service*

Allegheny Conference honors MPH employees

MT. PLEASANT, Pa.—At its annual meeting July 17, Allegheny Mennonite Conference honored 90 former Mennonite Publishing House employees. Conference minister Kurt Horst welcomed the guests: "We want to say thank you to all of you who have worked at MPH and for all that you've meant to us." He added that MPH employees became active leaders of congregations within Allegheny. An impromptu poll showed that nearly half of those present had served in conference leadership roles.

Jack Scott, a former MPH employee, said that "resources come from ... a creative community, a competent community, an articulate community, a motivated community."—*Joe Roos*

Bluffton ends $5.8 million funding initiative

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Bluffton College exceeded the goal of $5.65 million for the Students First Funding Initiative. Students First was a two-year funding initiative begun in 2002 and concluded in June. "The Students First initiative provided funding for both renovations and new construction for student recreational and academic areas," according to Barb Quatman, director of development.

Bluffton received $5,808,692 in support for the Students First Funding Initiative from alumni, faculty, staff, parents and friends. "It is most gratifying to have received gift support from over 95 percent of our faculty and staff over these past two years," says Stan Clemens, vice president for institutional advancement.

Bluffton received $2,914,384 in total giving for the fiscal year ending in June.—*Bluffton College News Service*

Marietta Sawatzky

Taiwanese church planter celebrates 100th

Ong Thian-bin celebrates his 100th birthday with the congregations he helped plant in Taiwan. Hsi-Tun Mennonite Church, one of three congregations Ong and his wife were instrumental in planting, hosted a worship celebration July 11 that included a sermon preached by Sheldon Sawatzky, Mennonite Mission Network's director for East Asia.

Bethany Keener

Volunteer chefs help out at MVS retreats

William Schrag of Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan., volunteers to cook for Mennonite Voluntary Service retreats and orientations. Marie and Homer Wedel, Virgil and Vernell Kaufman, and Maxine, William's wife, all members of Eden, join him.

Mennonites elected to House of Commons

Six Mennonites were elected to the House of Commons in Canada in the June 28 elections.

- Paul Steckle, a Liberal who has represented Huron Bruce riding in Ontario since 1993, is a member of Zurich Mennonite Church.
- Vic Toews, a Conservative representing Provencher in Manitoba, was reelected for a second term. He attends McIvor Mennonite Brethren Church in Winnipeg.
- Raymond Chan, a Liberal, was reelected in Richmond, B.C., for a third term (he was defeated in 2000). An immigrant from Hong Kong in 1969, Chan was Canada's first cabinet minister of Chinese descent. He attends a Vancouver Chinese Mennonite Brethren Church.
- Mark Warawa, a Conservative, was elected for the first time in Langley, B.C. He is a member of Central Heights Church (Mennonite Brethren) in Abbotsford.
- Other Mennonite Brethren elected were Ken Epp, Conservative, of Edmonton-Sherwood Park in Alberta, and Werner Schmidt, Conservative, in Kelowna, B.C.—*compiled by Margaret Loewen Reimer for* Canadian Mennonite

IN BRIEF

Book shows that working poor in America forgotten

In a review of David K. Shipler's book *The Working Poor: Invisible in America* (Knopf), Wally Kroeker writes: "Shipler strips bare the delusion that anyone who works hard can get ahead. 'The American Myth still supposes that any individual from the humblest origins can climb to well-being,' he says. Sadly, it just ain't so."—*The Marketplace*

Study says more violence and sex allowed in films

A new study from the Harvard School of Public Health has found that a decade of "ratings creep" has allowed more violent and sexually explicit content into films, suggesting that movie raters have grown more lenient in their standards. The study criticized the ratings system, which is run by the Motion Picture Association of America, for confusing and murky descriptions of movie content and called for a standardized universal rating system that would be used across all entertainment media. The study, which was issued July 13, quantified what children's advocates and critics of the ratings system have said anecdotally for years: that a movie rated PG or PG-13 today has more sexual or violent content than a similarly rated movie in the past.—*New York Times*

A Christian

The photograph with this article is from the tomb of a Roman soldier at a museum in Colchester, England. In his right hand the man carries the vitus or vine staff that symbolizes his military rank as a centurion. His left hand grasps the gladius, a short sword designed to puncture armor. A second sword on his right side is sheathed in a "soldier's belt" of the kind Marcellus threw to the ground when he pledged allegiance to Jesus Christ. This otherwise unknown centurion died in England about the same time Marcellus was put on trial in Morocco.

pledge of allegiance

Regardless of what the courts say about specific words in the Pledge of Allegiance, followers of Jesus Christ should ponder the wisdom of saying the pledge at all.

by J. Nelson Kraybill

This summer the U.S. Supreme Court heard the case of an atheist who did not want his 9-year-old daughter at public school to say "one nation under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. The man brought the case because he thought the phrase violated a First Amendment guarantee that the government will not "establish" religion. The Supreme Court dismissed the case on a technicality: The man did not have legal custody of his daughter.

Religious nature of patriotism: Regardless of what the courts say about specific words in the Pledge of Allegiance, followers of Jesus Christ should ponder the wisdom of saying the pledge at all. Political allegiance in this country has religious overtones that sometimes shade into idolatry. In the long shadow of Sept. 11, millions of bumper stickers have "God bless America" superimposed upon the flag. When reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, even civilians stand at attention and put hand over heart. Politicians of both parties who helped launch the current war in Iraq want to be seen as God-fearing and churchgoing believers. American presidents swear to defend the Constitution by putting their right hand on a Bible that says, "Swear not at all."

Allegiance in this country is so closely tied to military might that it should raise questions for followers of the Lamb.

The New Testament is explicit about Christian obligations to

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government: respect rulers, pay taxes and obey laws that do not conflict with allegiance to Jesus. Christians are not anarchists. Like Jeremiah, we "seek the welfare of the city" and the country where God has placed us (Jeremiah 29:7). But allegiance in this country is so closely tied to military might that it should raise questions for followers of the Lamb.

Glorification of war: Our national anthem celebrates "the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air," which "gave proof through the night that our flag was still there." The lyrics glorify an 1814 battle between British and American forces at Baltimore. That song seemed especially inappropriate to my family and me during our years of living and worshiping in England. We want to celebrate the diversity, generosity and creativity of America, not the bloodletting that resulted when failed diplomacy led to war.

The phrase "under God" hardly makes the Pledge of Allegiance more appropriate for Christians. That phrase was not in the Pledge when it first appeared in 1892. Politicians inserted the reference to God in 1954 but not because they wanted to follow the Sermon on the Mount or other teachings of the Son of God. Rather it was politically expedient for a nation fighting atheistic Communism to claim God on our side. Mention of God in the pledge gives the impression that God blesses American dominance in the world. The last verse of the American national anthem does the same: "Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just, and this be our motto, 'In God is our trust.'"

Witness of the early church: Christians in the early church generally refused to give allegiance to the emperor. The earliest confession of faith, "Jesus is Lord" (1 Corinthians 12:3), used exactly the same terminology as those who proclaimed "Caesar is Lord." Of course that was an era when the emperor claimed to be divine and was worshiped as a god.

No American president claims divinity, but many Americans give government the kind of allegiance that belongs to God alone. The nation has followed without much hesitation as Democrat and Republican administrations have led us into enormous bloodshed in Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere. We have supported political leaders who seemed prepared to pay almost any price—including the risk of nuclear annihilation—to protect sources of cheap oil and other scarce commodities.

Time magazine columnist Charles Krauthammer, in a September 2003 essay, captured something of the borderline idolatry in U.S. power. Krauthammer underscored that people must stop thinking that this country can fix everything. "It is time the world recognizes that we are not God," he wrote. "America today is the closest the world has ever seen to God. But, alas, the gap remains great."

The columnist urges other nations to help the United States defeat Iraq by saying, "If the world wants us to play God, especially in godforsaken places, it had better help. We cannot tend to every sparrow in the forest. Not even God does." Such candid comments expose the fine line between patriotism and idolatry.

The courage of Marcellus: We do well to remember the courage and conviction of believers in the early church who would not pledge allegiance to the emperor. Because his bones supposedly are preserved in the basilica at Notre Dame University in northern Indiana, I find the Roman centurion Marcellus especially attractive.

In the year A.D. 298, enemies threatened the Roman Empire on several fronts. For reasons of state security, the government increased pressure on soldiers and others to demonstrate allegiance to the "divine" emperor. In the country we call Morocco, protocol required the centurion Marcellus to lead his troops in giving allegiance to Rome on the emperor's birthday.

An ancient account states that "Marcellus rejected these pagan festivities." He threw down his soldier's belt (which carried his weapons) in front of the legionary standards (the Roman eagle and images of the emperor). Then he spoke in a loud voice in front of his troops: "I am a soldier of Jesus Christ, the eternal king. From now I cease to serve your emperors and I despise the worship of your gods of wood and stone, for they are deaf and dumb images."

The record says the soldiers under the command of Marcellus were "amazed," and

We want to celebrate the diversity, generosity and creativity of America, not the bloodletting that resulted when failed diplomacy led to war.

promptly arrested him. An account of his trial in October 298 records the following exchange between the judge Agricolanus and Marcellus:

Agricolanus: "Did you say the things that are recorded in the prefect's report?"

Marcellus: "Yes, I did."

Agricolanus: "You held the military rank of centurion, first class?"

Marcellus: "Yes,"

Agricolanus: "What madness possessed you to throw down the symbols of your military oath and to say the things you did?"

Marcellus: "No madness possesses those who fear the Lord."

Agricolanus: "Then you did say all those things that are set down in the prefect's report?"

Marcellus: "Yes, I said them."

Agricolanus: "You threw down your weapons?"

Marcellus: "Yes, I did. For it is not fitting that a Christian, who fights for Christ his Lord, should fight for the armies of this world."

Agricolanus: "What Marcellus has done merits punishment according to military rules. And so, whereas Marcellus, who held the rank of centurion, first class, has confessed that he has disgraced himself by publicly renouncing his military oath, … I hereby sentence him to death by the sword."

Marcellus (being led out to execution): "Agricolanus, may God reward you."

There is debate among scholars about why many Christians in the first centuries refused to serve in the military. Was it because Jesus said we should love our enemies? Was it the biblical injunction against killing? Was it because at the summit of the military hierarchy stood an emperor who claimed to be divine?

Probably all of the above played into the courageous decision of Marcellus not to pledge allegiance to emperor and empire. Similar issues of violence and patriotism that shades into idolatry should give Christians in the United States pause about pledging allegiance to flag or country today.

Marcellus died on Oct. 30, 298. This year on that date I expect to visit the church in northern Indiana where his bones supposedly rest. Regardless of whether the relics are authentic, the memory of a courageous conscientious objector is lodged a few miles from my home. I honor his decision not to pledge allegiance to emperor and empire.

Worship of God and the Lamb should be our pledge of allegiance, the regular ritual that shapes hearts and minds in the likeness of Christ.

Such symbolic acts penetrate the soul, affecting us in ways we cannot fully anticipate. Worship of God and the Lamb should be our pledge of allegiance, the regular ritual that shapes hearts and minds in the likeness of Christ.

J. Nelson Kraybill is president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

A Christian pledge of allegiance

In public school classrooms, civic clubs and in many other settings, millions of Americans say the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. For Christians who want alternative wording, Associate Mennonite Biblical Seminary professors June Alliman Yoder and J. Nelson Kraybill drafted the pledge below. "This pledge follows cadences of the pledge to the flag," Kraybill says, "but the focus is on loyalty to a Trinitarian God known most fully in Jesus Christ. It highlights the fact that our highest allegiance is to a global people of God, not to a territorial political entity."

I pledge allegiance to Jesus
Christ,

And to God's kingdom for
which he died—

One Spirit-led people the
world over, indivisible,

With love and justice
for all.

Defining what is real

The major reason we gather to worship on Sunday morning is to receive a picture of the reality of God as seen in Jesus.

by Earl Zimmerman

Christians are called to follow Jesus in the midst of societies that do not necessarily recognize him and even contradict his life and message. Powerful people and institutions shape our world and insist on defining what's real. They can be unforgiving of those of us who push too hard against the status quo. We find that out early in our lives and learn to keep our heads low.

So what is a poor preacher who wants to make friends and influence important people supposed to do with Jesus' sermons in Luke? In Jesus' hometown of Nazareth, he got the folks so angry that they tried to throw him over a cliff (Luke 4:16-30). Apparently he didn't learn his lesson because a little later, in his sermon on a level place (Luke 6:17-26), he was going at it again. Did he enjoy controversy?

Jesus had a large and enthusiastic following among the people. Luke says great crowds from all over flocked to hear him. Yet he didn't seem to care much about influencing important rich people. Instead he took them on, "Woe to you rich!"

Luke says great crowds from all over flocked to hear Jesus. Yet he didn't seem to care much about influencing important rich people. Instead he took them on, "Woe to you rich!"

Was this sermon Jesus' regular stump speech? We have another version of it, without the "woes" and known as the Beatitudes, in Matthew 5:1-11. (We like that one better.) Jesus was responding to the needs and aspirations of the people. One can imagine the excitement in the crowd; an anticipation that great things were beginning to happen—God's reign was coming. We know that such goings-on soon caught the attention of the religious and political leaders in Palestine. Jesus was making enemies who eventually sought to destroy him.

The powers that be: Back to the poor preacher standing in front of a typical congregation in our day. Few of us have the imagination or the courage to preach like that. We keep our heads low and try not to take on the powers that be. Apparently Jesus wasn't even trying to persuade people with money to give to the church budget. I don't remember them telling me about this in seminary.

Before we preach on these texts we should warn our congregations that these

Gospel stories are revolutionary. They want to mess with our lives and upset our settled sureties.

In Jesus' day, imperial Roman rule was oppressive in occupied territories such as Galilee. Heavy taxes and debts were destroying families and local communities. Notice how often taxes, debts, absentee landlords and occupation soldiers are part of the Gospel stories.

In his book *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Fortress Press, 2003), New Testament scholar Richard Horsley says there were two related aspects to Jesus' message and program. The first was the condemnation of the ruling elites, including the priestly rulers. The other was the restoration of Israel, especially in socially devastated Galilean villages.

Luke introduces Jesus' sermon on a level place by stating that large crowds were flocking to hear him and be healed of their diseases. Since the beginning of the modern world we have two basic ways of understanding healing stories in the Bible. One is to see them as individualistic, supernatural events that transcend the laws of nature. The other way is to see them as remnants of an ancient worldview. Both tend to spiritualize these healing stories and to disconnect them from their social reality.

Horsley argues that we need to understand them in relation to their social setting. They include both an individual and social dimension. For example, in the story of Jesus healing the demoniac, the demons say their name is "legion," symbolizing the Roman military occupation (Luke 8:26-39). In the story of Jesus healing the daughter of the leader of the synagogue, the child is reported to be 12 years old. Likewise, the woman healed of a hemorrhage had her sickness for 12 years (Luke 8:40-56). We know the number 12 symbolizes all of Israel. In other words, these healings involve more than solitary individuals. They symbolize the restoration of the whole people of God.

What happens when we pray for the healing of our loved ones, for needs around us and for our world? The sick among us often embody the brokenness in our communities and in our world. When we understand these needs in their individual and social dimensions, we recognize that our prayers are part of a process of resisting oppression and restoring the people of God, beginning right here in our congregations.

Our prayers are part of a process of resisting oppression and restoring the people of God, beginning right here in our congregations.

God's healing presence: Sometimes we can practically feel that during our prayers for people on Sunday morning. We experience God's healing presence in our midst. Janet Morley expresses it well in her poem "I Want So Much This Freedom" from her book *All Desires Known* (1994). Think of it as individual and corporate healing—something that's happening in our bodies but also in our life together as a people:

"I want so much this freedom,
this life not pain-free
but unparalyzed;
this movement, chosen
not without struggle
but loosed from self-wounding,
corrupt obedience to an evil law.

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This work, uninflicted, whole, exuberant,
I have wanted this so much."

Morley's poem expresses our deepest God-given desire, not only for ourselves but for our congregation, our community, our world. Many health-care professionals recognize the psychosomatic and interrelational aspects of sickness and the healing process. This doesn't take away from the mystery and wonder of God's healing power. Instead it frames it and helps us see the connections with all of life in community. It may also help explain why the good church folks at Nazareth got so angry when Jesus explained why he wasn't able to perform many healings in their town (Luke 4:23-30).

My practical side reminds me that it's time for a reality check. Our world is broken, brutal and often unforgiving. We see and hear that in the news every day. But who gets to say what's real? We should not give the news media and the pundits full reign in defining the world for us.

In "Get Real," Pulpit Resource 32, No. 1 (2004), William Willimon tells us: "We can only live in the world that we see. So debates about what is a fact, what is real, tend to be arguments around the basic question, 'Well, what do you see?' What's going on? Who is in charge? Why are we here? Where are we heading?"

Jesus comes down on a level place and preaches. We think we know this sermon, but listen again. Notice that it doesn't begin by telling us what to do. As my grade school English teacher emphasized, "It's in the indicative and not in the imperative." It defines the way things are in the kingdom of God—who's blessed and who's not.

Reality check: It's primarily a sermon about God. Everything else is related to that divine reality. Time for another reality check. It's easy to jump to the conclusion that God punishes the wicked and socks it to the ungrateful—if not in this world then surly in the next one. Isn't that what the blessings and woes are about?

Jesus' sermon is about seeing the way things are from God's point of view. It's about what's real.

Not so fast. Jesus tells us to love our enemies because God shows mercy (Luke 6:35). To whom? The wicked and the ungrateful.

Recall that this is what got the Old Testament prophet Jonah so upset when God told him to go preach in Nineveh. Jonah had every reason to hate the Ninevites because of the cruel way they had destroyed whole communities in Israel. He didn't want to go because he knew God was merciful, while he wanted that wicked city destroyed. After a dramatic adventure in which the prophet first headed in the opposite direction, he eventually preached in the streets of Nineveh. Sure enough, God was merciful. The story ends with the angry prophet sulking outside the city, wishing he could die. And God explains how much he loves those wicked Ninevites—not to mention all the children and animals in that great city (Jonah 4:9-11).

Jesus' sermon isn't about doing anything. It's not about divine punishment, which easily slips into human punishment. Instead it's about seeing the way things are from God's point of view. It's about what's real. It's carefully balanced with four blessings and four woes. Blessed are you poor. Woe to you rich. Blessed are you hungry. Woe to you who are full. Blessed are you who weep. Woe to you who are laughing now. Blessed are you who are hated, reviled and excluded. Woe to you when all people speak well of you.

Rocking a few boats: The last blessing needs a little further explanation. When we live according to Jesus' reality, we're likely to get some good religious people upset with us. It starts playing with their sureties about who's in and who's out, what's up and what's down. They don't appreciate that. Being excluded probably meant being barred from the synagogue—the worship and the social life of the community. Jesus said that was a time for rejoicing and leaping for joy because their reward in heaven is great. If we're not rocking a few boats, something's wrong.

What Jesus is talking about is God's special care for the needy and the most vulnerable. It's an invitation to see with new eyes. It's what God's reign looks like. You are blessed.

The woes are an appeal to the oppressor's humanity. It's hard to see ourselves as oppressors. We have so many rationalizations for the way things are. As Martin Luther King Jr. said during the civil rights struggle, segregation not only destroys the dignity of poor blacks, it also destroys the essential humanity of whites in segregated communities. Likewise, the growing disparity between the rich and the poor in the past several decades has diminished everyone's humanity.

The major reason we gather to worship on Sunday morning is to remind ourselves about what's what. We come together to receive a picture of the reality of God as seen in Jesus. It's the vision that shapes our lives as a people of God. That is what's real.

Earl Zimmerman is co-pastor of Shalom Mennonite Congregation, Harrisonburg, Va.

Micah 6:8

by Paul David Adkins

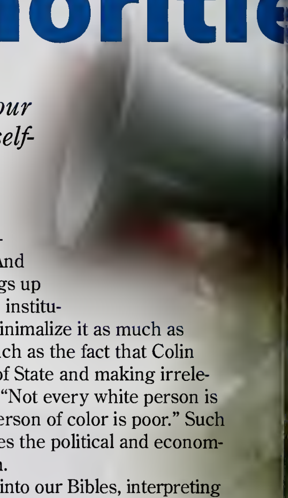
ArtToday, Inc.

I named my son Micah
before he entered our lives silent
and otherworldly, then left forever.
Afterwards, this verse set everything
straight. After trying key after key
in a lock, down to the last on the ring,
things finally clicked. It's not the money
we tithe; it's not the law we obey.
It's our faith he's monitoring.
When my wife called to tell me
Micah was still as a stone in her womb,
I drove to the doctor convinced
he wasn't dead. I knew it to the last.
My faith stood up all the way to the ultrasound's
mute, black facts. His heart
did not even shiver. Two weeks later,
we walked to a park and planted a bulb,
released a blue balloon into nothing,
and watched it disappear. This is how
we walk with God humbly to his house,
calling the names of the dead as we go.

Paul David Adkins lives in Calcium, N.Y.

Changing authoriti

Mennonites in North America can be radicals again if we recognize our power and privilege and become active supporters of local efforts for self-determination by people of color.



by Dan Krehbiel

Mennonites in North America today reflect the full range of mainstream political opinions, from the most conservative to the most progressive. But the nature of our relationship to authority is almost uniform across the spectrum: We respect it.

What's so outrageous about that? Isn't this a good thing?

Respect for authority sounds overwhelmingly positive because we live in an age when concentrated political power has succeeded in winning the best possible image for itself. This is true despite the fact that more human lives and natural resources are controlled by a handful of people than ever before in human history.

We "radical Anabaptists" actually seem more deferential to authority than many other sectors of mainstream North American society, including other churches. For example, while many are calling for the outright removal of certain power-holders from political office, we ask everyone to "pray for these authorities so that they will make more sound decisions."

Understanding our privilege: While most white people deny that they benefit from a racialized society in which whites are presumed innocent, safe and responsible, while people of color are presumed guilty, dangerous and irresponsible, we Mennonites are still in denial that we are even part of mainstream white society.

We read our privilege into our Bibles, interpreting the poor as guilty sinners Jesus forgives.

We have yet to accept that we are no longer primarily a simple agrarian people and no longer being persecuted by anyone. Contrary to the distance we imagine between ourselves and other Christians in the United States, we belong to the same privileged class. We hold our conferences at the same expensive hotels; we enjoy the same friendly cooperation with the police during our events; our children receive some of the highest quality education in the country. We enjoy every privilege of being white.

Whether we like it or not, this situates us to sympathize with and defer to the powerful. It means we take seriously the word of academics, professionals, government officials and corporate spokespeople and question the motives and wisdom of people of color. And whenever someone brings up the issue of racism as an institution of our society, we minimalize it as much as possible, citing things such as the fact that Colin Powell is the Secretary of State and making irrelevant comments such as, "Not every white person is wealthy and not every person of color is poor." Such unsound reasoning denies the political and economic reality we benefit from.

We read our privilege into our Bibles, interpreting the poor as guilty sinners Jesus forgives. In contrast to this reading, theologian Ched Myers notes that Jesus was not forgiving sins of the poor but canceling their debts ("aphiemi" in Greek)—their financial/material obligations to the powerful. In Jesus' language of Aramaic, "sin" and "debt" are the same word. The sin Jesus forgave was the sin of economic exploitation committed by property owners and public officials. We would rather not think that our people (white society) as creditors need forgiveness for exploiting other people.

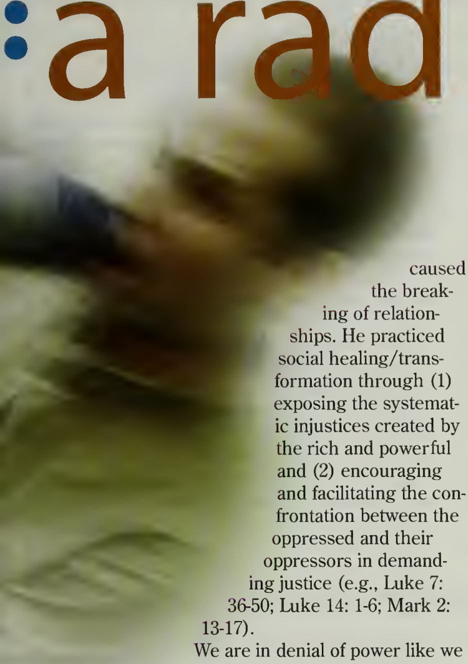
Resolving conflict without addressing power: It is one thing to read the gospel through the lens of our privilege. It is another to try to solve the world's problems through this lens.

Our philosophical opposition to war, subculture of anti-confrontationalism and increasing faith in social science have led us to become experts in mediation and resolution of all things that create social friction—"conflict." Undoubtedly the work of facilitating good communication between two equal parties as practiced, for example, by victim-offender mediation is a worthwhile service. But our efforts to "resolve" or "transform conflict" on a grander sociopolitical scale actually work against the biblical vision of social justice because we do not take into account one important thing: power.

We all know the world is not flat, but when we get into the practices of peacemaking and social transfomation, we suddenly believe it is. We imagine the world as a football field with two sides and a host of different players in the stadium.

The Bible, on the other hand, describes the political world in terms of great inequalities—"mountains" and "valleys" and "crooked paths." Jesus had no concept of sides but instead addressed the brokenness of the world by confronting the inequality of power that had

:a radical call



caused the breaking of relationships. He practiced social healing/transformation through (1) exposing the systematic injustices created by the rich and powerful and (2) encouraging and facilitating the confrontation between the oppressed and their oppressors in demanding justice (e.g., Luke 7: 36-50; Luke 14: 1-6; Mark 2: 13-17).

We are in denial of power like we are in denial of the institution of racism.

We must be careful not to draw conclusions through social science without recognizing our privilege. It is dangerously false to believe we can be objective as we subconsciously identify with the powerful and are naturally inclined to give their perspective more credence than that of oppressed peoples. The worldview of people of color does not stimulate our white intellects.

The story of Jesus makes foolishness of the idea of objectivity or balancing viewpoints. These are recent ideas created in a privileged context and, ironically, while they are promoted within the more progressive half of white society, they actually work against a more just world. The stories of the Bible make it clear there is no "balance" between those with power and resources and those without.

To be radicals again: Mennonites in North America have the opportunity to be radicals again if we are willing to recognize our power and privilege and live our faith by becoming active volunteers and supporters for local efforts for self-determination by people of color. Instead of following the philosophical path to cure-all solutions for the world's problems we should learn how to work together with the oppressed wherever we live to bring about justice in their communities.

Unfortunately, a few things have been holding us back from getting our hands dirty being active and involved in our communities.

1. We need to stop letting the Mennonite way get in the way of the way. We need to stop being too good for everyone else. We can still value our uniqueness and preserve our history without being the party-poopers of the larger church. Our way is not better, and other Christians who are active in their communities and in secular society will appreciate our participation.

2. We must recognize that our commitment to anti-violence is a reaction to the culture that empires create instead of a radical witness against the structural injustices of empires: racism, classism, concentration of resources and power. We are wasting our time putting everything into the context of violence and war. We will have much less violence if we have a more equal distribution of power in our communities. Let's stop reacting and start building equality in our own backyards.

We can be radical disciples of Jesus by challenging our privilege and working with others for justice. We are called to make the oppressed our new authorities, to turn our sympathies and our bias toward people of color.

We all know the future of our church depends on our ability to engage meaningfully the communities where our churches are located and to make Mennonites of color and the white majority one mixed and more equally growing body. These concerns are echoed over and over in *The Mennonite*. But the future of our faith communities depends even more on our participation in social justice and our active partnership with churches and organizations of color. We must be get connected and involved, otherwise we will lose all relevance, and our congregations will alienate themselves more from those who are doing justice, loving mercy and walking humbly with God.

We can be radical disciples of Jesus by challenging our privilege and working with others for justice.

Dan Krehbiel is a community organizer doing an internship in Brooklyn, N.Y., through the Center for Third World Organizing. He is biracial and served with Mennonite Voluntary Service in 2002-2003 in Tucson, Ariz., where he attended Shalom Mennonite Church. Readers may respond to his article at danielkrehbiel@yahoo.com.

Let's bless large Mennonite congregations

James M. Lapp is conference pastor for Franconia Conference.

All congregations need our blessing, yet Mennonites seem ambivalent about larger congregations. When representatives of about 75 large (300-plus members) Mennonite congregations in the United States and Canada met to explore the unique challenges they face due to congregational size, they said they sometimes feel apologetic about the churches they serve due to the reactions of pastors and members of smaller congregations. What are the dynamics for Mennonite Church USA when half its congregations have 70 or fewer members, and a third of the membership is in large churches?

There are distinct benefits for members in churches of all sizes. Some research even suggests greater satisfaction among members of small congregations. Churches tend to like being the size they are (in spite of what they say) and find ways to sabotage efforts to grow or change.

Large Mennonite congregations do not appear in a vacuum. Many have been large for decades, but at some point they grew from small to large. Many in our society seek large churches with a broader range of ministries for people of all ages. We may assume that the current missional emphasis in Mennonite Church USA will result in even more large churches. Wouldn't we like to see small healthy congregations grow into large churches (unless demographics prohibit such growth)? While the suggestion that large churches be challenged to spawn new congregations is important, this is usually a church-planting strategy rather than a means of reducing congregational size.

The critical questions are whether we appreciate the large congregations in our denomination and whether we wish to have more large churches. Our ecclesiology favors the family metaphor for the church. In the popular mind, combining large churches with the ideas of "family" or "exercising the gifts of all members" or "community" seems incongruent, but it need not be.

I see an ambivalence in our theology and practice around large churches, a kind of love-hate relationship. Large churches are needed to host big gatherings and to contribute financial and people resources for conferences and institutions of the church. But don't let them become too strong, dominating or proud.

When one pastor of a large congregation was asked how their church is viewed, he said without hesitation, "We are viewed as big, fat, rich and impersonal." Another pastor of a large congregation reported more negative than positive feedback from neighboring Mennonites. Is this the message we wish to give our large churches?

Large congregations face many challenges. Too often they struggle with wanting to be viewed as simply a big version of a small church rather than accept the uniqueness and potential of being a large congregation. Can our theology accommodate congregations that require systems for ministry and relationships rather than managing through interpersonal acquaintance with everyone in the church? Learning to lead a large congregation with multiple staff and forming a healthy leadership team present demands for which few pastors are trained or equipped. At times conference staff do not feel equipped to provide the resources and mentoring these pastors need for the complexity of their roles.

Sometimes pastors of large churches find more affinity with institutional leaders than with pastors of smaller congregations. When pastors of large churches need to posture themselves demurely lest they offend leaders of small congregations, it hampers their effectiveness and capacity to grow. While large congregations appear self-sufficient, and in certain ways they are more so than small churches, their needs for outside resources are real and frequently are found primarily through parachurch organizations or megachurch ministries.

Let's joyfully embrace our large congregations and release them to serve us with courage and confidence. Let's bless the one-third of our members and the pastors of large churches for the ministry to which God has called them and not hinder the gift they are to the kingdom of God and to Mennonite Church USA. Big is not better, but God seems to enjoy large, lively and growing bodies of believers (check Acts 2:41, 5:14).

All congregations need our blessing. It is not that large churches need more support and blessing than others, but neither should they need to apologize for their existence. I invite us to recognize the challenges and opportunities that our large congregations offer us, and I encourage us to empower and bless them in the service of God and the church. TM

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Mennonite retirement communities**—Melanie Zuercher
- **Financing your retirement**—Dennis LeFevre

South Central joins Mennonite Church USA

Decision will bring group out of 'limbo' with the larger denominational body.

South Central Conference discovered July 17 that two votes were better than one when it came to discerning that SCC will become a full member of Mennonite Church USA. In a two-tiered process, SCC decided to become a full member of the denomination during its annual assembly July 16-18 in Austin, Texas. In the first vote, delegates gave a 90 percent approval and 10 percent disapproval to move from being provisional members to full members. In a second vote—that included discernment questions—delegates voted 95 percent for and 5 percent against the direction set by the first vote.

"I am delighted with the outcome," says SCC conference minister Robert Nolt. "It's the fruit of a lot of dialogue in the last three years. The decision also brings us out of being in 'limbo' in our relationship to the larger church."

The decision was a milestone for Nolt. He began his conference post in August 2001, a week before delegates voted only 54 percent in favor of becoming a full member of the denomination and remained within provisional status. A following motion to withdraw from Mennonite Church USA gained only 37 percent. Following the 2001 votes, several Missouri-Arkansas district congregations withdrew their membership from SCC.

In response, Nolt and other conference leaders helped South Central's remaining 47 congregations talk about their concerns and set future direction. A series of meetings in 2002 and 2003 helped build trust and understanding.

"We really focused on issues that are burning in the hearts of people in the heartland," says SCC moderator Eber Ramer. "Economic survival, the flight of our children out of rural areas and the church being eroded as a result. We then explored what it would mean for us not to be a part of the larger church. Put in that light, it became clearer how being part of the larger church will help us find leaders, bring us teaching resources and help us discern biblically our direction in the context of the larger community."—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA news service*

Nolt

Mountain States conference proposed

Six congregations would leave Western District to join new group.

A proposal for a new area conference—called Mountain States Mennonite Conference—as part of Mennonite Church USA may help everyone gain something. But it will mean a few changes first.

Leaders within the Mountain States region are excited about changes intended to spark new ministry passion in the area and support the denomination's missional focus, says Don Rheinheimer, staff person for the committee that formed the proposal and co-pastor of Mountain Community Mennonite Church in Palmer Lake, Colo. The push for finalizing this proposal follows an action taken by the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board in June that established criteria for forming new area conferences.

Rheinheimer tested the proposal with Western District Conference delegates July 3 during their assembly in Oklahoma City because six Western District congregations are invited to be part of the new conference, if it forms. Mountain States would also include all 16 congregations in Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference, four congregations that are dually affiliated with Rocky Mountain and Western District and two congregations that belong only to Western District.

"This proposal will help us retain the values we shared in Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference, as well as to work in ways we hadn't before," he says. "We also want to form a new model for how we work together. We want to encourage passion for ministry rather than structure for ministry."

Many Western District delegates seemed to focus on the gains, even with some sadness.

"There is a sense of loss that must be worked through on the part of Western District in letting go of six congregations," Rheinheimer says. "But ... Western District wants to stay in relationship in ways that will strengthen our former ties and form new partnerships."

Dorothy Nickel Friesen, conference minister for Western District, agrees.

"For nearly the last decade we've had many conversations about integration," she says. "While this may appear that we are losing six congregations, Western District can also claim that it planted those six churches, and this is a sign of their maturation."

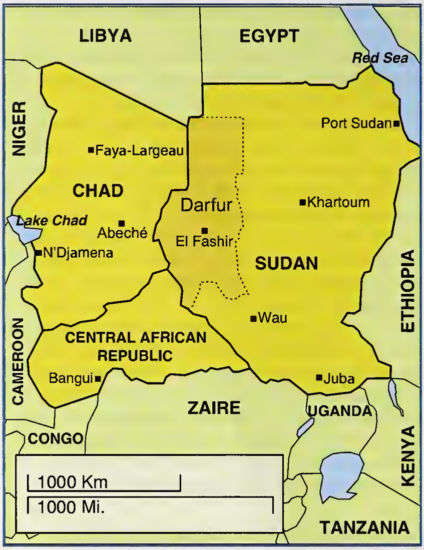
Pending an affirmative vote by regional congregations, the committee will send it to Mennonite Church USA leaders as an application for the formation of a new conference. The Constituency Leaders Council will review the application this fall and make a recommendation to the Executive Board. The Executive Board will then decide whether to present the proposal to the delegate assembly at Charlotte 2005 next July.—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA news service*

We want to form a new model for how we work together. We want to encourage passion for ministry rather than structure for ministry.
—Don Rheinheimer

MCC effort totals $130,000, sends team

Refugees in Chad are ignored as world attention focuses on troubles in Sudan.

Some 15,000 to 30,000 people have been killed in Darfur and a million more displaced in recent months.



As the humanitarian crisis in the Darfur region of western Sudan continues to make headlines, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is shipping milk powder and relief supplies to neighboring Chad, where tens of thousands of Darfur residents have sought refuge.

Part of the shipment will also go to southern Chad for refugees from the Central African Republic, whose situation is less publicized but no less dire. The total value of the response, including shipping costs, is estimated at $130,000 U.S.

An assessment team is also traveling to Sudan this month to determine how MCC can be involved in responding to ongoing needs in Darfur and other areas of this huge, complex country. MCC aid will be distributed to some 200 families (about 1,000 people) from Darfur now living near Abeché, Chad. The response includes eight metric tons of milk powder, valued at $24,800, and relief supplies including 200 relief kits, 290 school kits, 100 newborn kits, 80 health kits, clothing, blankets, sheets and towels. MCC's partner in this effort is CAEDESCE, the relief arm of the Chadian Protestant churches.

Some 15,000 to 30,000 people have been killed in Darfur and a million more displaced in recent months. In what the United Nations has described as "ethnic cleansing," militias are attacking indigenous villagers, leaving a trail of death, looting and rape. Both U.S. and U.N. officials are urging a swift response to the crisis.

MCC partner organizations are calling for responses to needs in other parts of Sudan as well. As the country's decades-long civil war—which has pitted government forces against rebels from the south—seems to be drawing to a close, many displaced southerners are returning home to start over and need help. And despite a recent peace agreement, pockets of violence continue to exist in various parts of the country.

The assessment team is expected to make recommendations for further assistance in Sudan—which could include relief shipments, personnel and local purchase of food or other necessities—by early August. MCC will draw on its relationships with Sudanese church organizations to craft its long-term response.—*MCC News Service*

Egyptian orphans find joy

The 50 girls who live at Fowler House in Cairo, Egypt, have had difficult lives, but at this church-run orphanage they study, work and play in a stable environment. They are cared for by Sister Mary, the house mother, and volunteers such as Rebecca St. Julien, who is a Mennonite Central Committee Serving and Working Together worker.

Education is a high priority, with funds from MCC's Global Family program helping cover costs for supplies, uniforms and tutoring. Baking bread (clockwise, from top center) are Nadia, Marie, Martha, Manel, Ibtisaam, and Sanaá.—*MCC News Service*

Nancy St. Julien

Couple works 35 years to translate Bible

Sixty million speak Gujarati language, but less than 1 percent are Christian.

In 1969, the Bible Society of India appointed Anil D. Solanki to begin a new translation of the Bible into his native language, Gujarati. Now, 35 years later, that project is completed, and the Bible is published.

Solanki, part-time professor of Old Testament at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va., was doing graduate studies in Old Testament in Bangalore, India, when he was asked to create a team to work on a new translation. At the time, Solanki was the leading Hebrew scholar among those who speak his native language of Gujarati. He invited three colleagues of various denominations to work with him.

"We had two primary goals in our translation work," Solanki recalls. "The first was to be faithful to the original Greek and Hebrew texts, and the second was to make the translation communicate readily to readers. The earlier translation was so outdated that it couldn't be used as a source.

Sixty million people around the world speak Gujarati. Most live in the state of Gujarat in India. The last Bible translation in the language was done 181 years ago. Over the years, the language has changed significantly. Solanki and his colleagues wanted a translation that could be comprehended by people with a high-school education.

"We wanted a language of the people," says Solanki, "rather than a highly literary language. It is somewhat similar to the Good News Bible."

All four translators lived in India but worked at the translation part-time. Solanki was a seminary professor and academic dean. Today only one of the translators remains in Gujarat state.

Solanki moved to Harrisonburg, in 1988, intending to stay for a year. An American Bible Society consultant came to check their translation and encouraged former Eastern Mennonite Seminary dean George R. Brunk III to let him stay longer and continue work on his project.

"The dean, the faculty and the whole seminary community were supportive of the project," Solanki says.

Since moving to the United States, Solanki has worked on the translation without remuneration. While living in Virginia, two of Solanki's colleagues came for extended visits to work on the translation.

"When I used to translate, the whole seminary knew because I would tell anyone I met what I was discovering in the Word of God," Solanki says.

This project became a family affair. Solanki's wife, Shaila, says their children grew with the project. When it began, their son Madhur was a toddler. Shaila provided hospitality and proofreading skills for the translators and handwrote some final manuscripts sent to the printer.

Jim Bishop

Anil and Shaila Solanki celebrate the completion of the Gujarati Bible, a project more than three decades in the making.

In 1976, the New Testament portion was completed and distributed. Work on the Old Testament began before that.

"There are people who speak our language who have migrated to Australia, New Zealand, England and other places," says Shaila. "Some of them have come from other religions, and when they saw our New Testament they were very excited because they could understand everything they read, so they were waiting for the whole Bible."

Less than 1 percent of those who speak Gujarati are Christian. To make the translation more understandable, the translators added footnotes, a new feature to this project.

"We wanted the reader to be in conversation with us about different manuscripts and different translations of certain words," says Solanki.

"There is so much depth in the Word of God," he says. "When you struggle with it and try to understand and try to put it in your mothertongue, it is a process. We believe that in our translation work we were inspired, like the original authors of the books of the Bible."

The translation manuscript was completely done by hand, then sent in 1995 to the printers, where it was put into type by professionals. It was proofread and corrected seven times. Solanki is working through the first printing to correct any mistakes.

The first printing of 3,000 copies was an experimental run for feedback and correction. The next printing will likely be around 20,000 copies.

"It is a great privilege to work on the Word of God," says Solanki, "It was a lot of hard work, but it was a joyful experience."—*Laura Lehman Amstutz, a student in the master of divinity program at Eastern Mennonite Seminary*

The last Bible translation in [Gujarati] was done 181 years ago. Over the years the language changed significantly.

High-school choir in Chengdu, China

Eastern Mennonite High School students get rock star treatment.

Galen Lehman

Eastern Mennonite High School choir member Caitlin Helmuth with new friends in Chengdu, China.

Squishy squid tentacles with succulent suction cups just waiting to be barbecued and eaten. Roasted scorpion or starfish as fast food on a stick. These were just a few of the amenities available to 41 Eastern Mennonite High School Touring Choir teenagers and their chaperones on a three-week concert tour of China arranged by China Educational Exchange (CEE) director Myrrl Byler in June. EMHS is in Harrisonburg, Va.

CEE teachers and administrators in China were keys to the successful trip. CEE program coordinators Rod and Kathi Suderman arranged many of the logistics, and CEE teacher Theresa Rempel accompanied the group for much of the trip.

"To know that CEE has the contacts and friendships in China to pull off this kind of thing was very satisfying," says Byler. He notes that normally Chinese authorities and travel agencies make all these kinds of arrangements. Those contacts have been cultivated since 1981 in a jointly sponsored program of Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Central Committee, Eastern Mennonite Mission, Witness (Canada) and, formerly, the Mennonite Brethren mission agency.

"As an educational exchange agency, we have a mandate to work with Mennonite colleges and educational institutions," Byler says. "We just recently had an Eastern Mennonite University cross-cultural experience in China (May) and are also arranging one for Bluffton (Ohio)College next May." Byler hopes students will consider volunteering with CEE in the future or elsewhere around the world because of their experiences.

For most of the students, the biggest highlight was not the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, Tiananmen Square or visiting the tallest Buddha in the world—or even the experience of singing at the prestigious and acoustically exquisite Sichuan Conservatory of Music. Rather it was the contacts they had with Chinese students of all ages, from elementary to high school to college. Rising 12th grader Caitlin Helmuth says her personal highlight was being grouped with some Chinese students for half a day, going to their dorms and classes.

"There were 12 girls in one dorm room," Helmuth says. "They were so excited to try out their English, talking about what they like to do, and we exchanged email addresses. I hope to keep up some relationships."

Students had the opportunity to share in Chinese classrooms about what life in America is like and heard from their counterparts about holidays, customs and school life in China. After concerts or appearances, they were mobbed by kids wanting to take photos.

"Everyone wanted pictures with choir members," says Chris Kniss, "like we were celebrities. Crowds of Chinese girls would surround especially the guys, huge smiles on their faces."

For EMHS choir director Jay Hartzler, seeing and hearing the enthusiasm of the audiences was the highlight of the trip.

"They were overwhelmingly ecstatic about our singing and just being there. For one audience, we were the only group of non-Chinese people they had ever seen en masse. One audience gave us a resounding ovation with cheering before we ever began, sort of like we were rock stars."

In reflecting on his experiences, David Showalter quotes from an older man, Nick Kaethler, who helped the students in Chengdu: "He said, 'For every statement made about China, the opposite is also true.' I have found these words resounding in my head many times. China can be simple and complex, friendly and hostile, old and new."

Byler frequently tells visitors to China that they will learn more about themselves and their own country than about China. "I also tell that to Chinese teachers coming to the United States," adds Byler. "Especially in a country that is quite different from your own, it is an opportunity to look at your own culture through other people's eyes, if you are perceptive. You see America through the eyes of others. You see how people think about Americans, see how Christian faith looks through the eyes of people who have very, very little background about Christianity."

—Melodie Davis of Mennonite Mission Network News Service

Crowds of Chinese girls would surround especially the guys, huge smiles on their faces.—Chris Kniss

Opening the window, inviting the voices

Marginalized women talk about their lives for project that turns into video.

What are two white women doing collecting stories of women of color? is a question Goshen (Ind.) associate professor of communication Pat McFarlane and social worker Linda Christophel have been asked on a number of occasions. At first glance they seem an unlikely pair to lead an oral history project about Mennonite women of color.

But their passion comes naturally. McFarlane's husband, Art, is Jamaican, and they have two bicultural, biracial children. Christophel, a 1983 Goshen graduate, and her husband have three children, two of them adopted from Korea.

"We first began to seek out stories of women of color across the Mennonite church because of our own international families and our awareness that the stories of women of color are not heard within the church," McFarlane says. "Our passion comes out of our own experiences with racism and prejudice."

The idea for such a project developed out of a week Christophel spent at the Creek Indian Reservation in Alabama in 1999.

"I have always loved stories, especially stories of people and their lives," Christophel says. "As I worked with the older women preparing food for a powwow, we talked together. In that conversation I began to hear some of their personal stories, and I wondered about other women of color [across] the Mennonite church."

A few months later, during a Sunday school retreat, Christophel and McFarlane made plans to gather stories of Mennonite women of color.

"This project energized us both," says McFarlane, "as we began writing to churches we knew had members of color, asking if they had women who would be willing to talk with us. So we began the adventure, not sure exactly where it would lead but hoping that we would eventually write a book that included the stories and women we found."

Goshen (Ind.) College faculty members Pat McFarlane (left) and Ed Cundiff will use stories from Mennonite women of color in a video to be released this fall.

Jodi H. Beyeler

The two women entered the project expecting that the stories they heard would be ones of discrimination and oppression.

"While the women did talk of that, what they wanted to spend more time talking about were their faith stories," Christophel says.

"We went looking for one story and found a different one," McFarlane says, "and so we listened to the stories they chose to tell—extraordinary stories from ordinary women who made potato salad or ugali, ministered to those with AIDS, preached the gospel, learned to forgive their enemies, lost family members but found that their faith in Jesus Christ sustained them."

In each interview McFarlane and Christophel use the same basic set of questions, but "we often ask additional questions also as a particular story emerges that we want to follow," McFarlane says.

The two women met with an oral historian at Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies, who "encouraged us to follow our instincts and said that there is no wrong way to do this," McFarlane says.

Using living sources for their research has been unpredictable but, McFarlane says, "I love that, because these are living women. I can go back and ask more questions and get more context. It is hard to do that with other kinds of research."

What began as simple audio recordings for a book of stories from women in the United States has expanded as the two women have collected 41 separate interviews over three years. The project went worldwide in the summer of 2003, when McFarlane attended Mennonite World Conference in Zimbabwe and with Ed Cundiff, a Goshen instructor in broadcast communication, videotaped 11 stories of women from around the world. The video should be available this fall.

"For much of our history, women's voices have been minimized or silenced," Christophel says. "Women of color have not only been marginalized by their gender but additionally because of their race. The contribution to the church will come by increasing awareness of … how each of them has used her spiritual gifts—often in the midst of difficulty—to build up the church in her area. I hope this knowledge will encourage and strengthen other women who are feeling marginalized to continue to do good work."—*Goshen College News Service*

Christophel

Women of color have not only been marginalized by their gender but additionally because of their race.
—Linda Christophel

Bluffton, Ohio, shop celebrates 30 years

More than $930,000 generated for Mennonite Central Committee since 1975

In 1974, the seed of an idea for providing help and hope to a local community and to those around the world was planted in the form of Et Cetera Shop in Bluffton, Ohio. Thirty years later, this seed has grown into a mature and thriving mission. Since 1975, the shop has also contributed more than $930,000 to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

Through the inspiration of Lois Kreider and her church, a nonprofit thrift and gift shop was established on Main Street in Bluffton. The idea was to sell used but useful donated clothing and household goods to support the sale and marketing of handicrafts made by people in developing countries through an MCC job development program now called Ten Thousand Villages.

This venture of faith was blessed from the beginning, and the shop became a fixture in the Bluffton community. It soon became apparent that the thrift shop would generate more income than was needed to support the sale of Ten Thousand Villages handicrafts, so proceeds were designated for MCC.

Forty-five MCC thrift shops have been started in the United States since 1974. In 2003, these shops made a combined contribution of more than $2.6 million to MCC.

Ten Thousand Villages has become the largest fair-trade organization in North America.

As a retail venture, the sale of Ten Thousand Villages handicrafts has been successful as well. Ten Thousand Villages was started in 1946 by Edna Ruth Byler, a hostess at MCC headquarters in Akron, Pa.

While traveling overseas with her husband, Byler was approached by MCC job creation workers about purchasing handicrafts made by women in developing countries. Byler brought these handicrafts back to the United States and sold them to her friends and neighbors.

From this humble beginning, Ten Thousand Villages has become the largest fair-trade organization in North America, with annual sales of more than $16 million.

Bluffton's Et Cetera Shop was the first retail store to operate year-round in the United States, and there are now more than 100 stores selling Ten Thousand Villages handicrafts. The Et Cetera Shop adopted the Ten Thousand Villages name for the gift shop in 2003 to better distinguish between the thrift and gift aspects of the business. —*VillagesBluffton*

EMU exceeds goal

New record for unrestricted giving

Eastern Mennonite University surpassed its goal for the University Fund for the 2003-2004 fiscal year, which ended June 30. EMU received a record $1.48 million for the University Fund, an 8 percent increase over last year's unrestricted giving. The amount included $365,000 to Eastern Mennonite Seminary, also a new record. The University Fund contributions goal was $1.43 million for the year.

The University Fund helps provide financial assistance to students and assists with technology upgrades and other annual operating expenses.

Alumni giving showed the largest increase, coming in at 18 percent above last year. Restricted giving was $2,765,961 compared with $2,261,170 in 2002-2003. Restricted gifts include donations to the University Commons, direct scholarships to students and special programs, such as the Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival, the Conflict Transformation Program and radio station WEMC-FM. Direct contributions to the Conflict Transformation Program set a new record at $60,746, as did the Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival, with $55,284. Contributions to university endowments increased by 50 percent over last year to $679,530.—*EMU News Service*

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IRELAND (September 3-14)
SWISS-VOLHYNIAN MENNONITE HERITAGE (September 15-29)
LANDS of the BIBLE (September 17-30)
CHINA (October 3-19)
FALL FOLIAGE TOUR of NEW ENGLAND (October 4-10)
CHRISTMAS MARKETS in AUSTRIA and GERMANY (December 1-8)

2005 TOURS

SERVICE TOUR in SUNNY JAMAICA (January 21-30)
CHURCHES and SAFARIS in KENYA and TANZANIA (February 13-24)
PARAGUAY SERVICE TOUR (March 31 - April 14)
TULIP TIME in HOLLAND (April 25 - May 4)
IN the FOOTSTEPS of the APOSTLE PAUL (May 27 - June 12)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 8-20)
SWITZERLAND, FRANCE and GERMANY for GRANDPARENTS/GRANDCHILDREN/FAMILIES (June 14-21)
SPECTACULAR SCANDINAVIA and its FJORDS (June 17 - July 1)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE (July 7-22)
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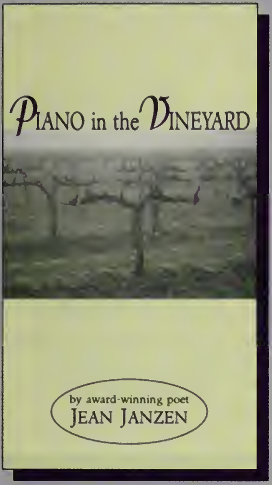

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"Jean Janzen's poems are lucid, clean, beautifully detailed—but she also knows well how fierce the hungers of body and spirit are." — Jeff Gundy, poet

About Jean Janzen —

Jean Janzen

Jean Janzen lives in Fresno, California. She has been selected for The Creative Writing Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts for her poetry.

Janzen's poetry has been published in many magazines and journals, including *Poetry, Christian Century, Gettysburg Review, Praire Schooner, Image, Poetry International,* and *The Common Reader.*

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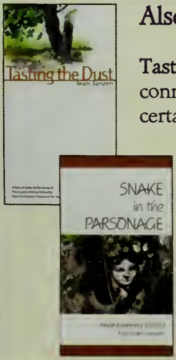

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Vietnamese Mennonites wait and pray

Leaders of church remain jailed; conference picks interim leadership.

Leaders of the Vietnam Mennonite Church met for prayer and spiritual renewal July 12-13, one month after the arrest of the church's vice president and general secretary, Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang.

Another arrest occurred just two weeks before the meeting. On June 30, Le Thi Hong Lien, one of the church's deaconesses, a children's Bible teacher, social worker and trainer of Saigon Christian scouts, was also arrested.

Quang was arrested by the security police in the city's District 2 on June 8 for "inciting others to oppose persons carrying out official duties." The police immediately launched a campaign in the community and among evangelical Christians to discredit Quang. National television and many newspapers carried these stories.

The Mennonite church, along with other Christian leaders, reject the allegations as attempts to divert attention from the government's main concern: Quang's systematic reporting of police harassment against religious groups.

On March 2, four of Quang's associates were arrested and beaten when they tried to report threats of secret police to local authorities. Quang and the four evangelists are being held at undisclosed locations. Family members have not been permitted to visit them.

At the July conference, 80 representatives from five districts chose interim leaders to serve until Pastor Quang's release: Pastor Quang's wife, Le Thi Phu Dung, serves as acting vice president of Vietnam Mennonite Church, and Truong Tri Hien, who had served as assistant to Quang, was named acting general secretary.

The conference called for the quick release of Pastor Quang and the other five being held, the return of confiscated church property and the end of police harassment.

On July 20, Mennonite World Conference officials met for a second time with officials of the Mission of Vietnam to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva, Switzerland, to discuss the arrest and detainment of church leaders and the harassment of the Vietnam Mennonite Church. MWC has also distributed an appeal by Mennonite Church Canada on behalf of the Vietnam Mennonite Church to the global Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches.—*Vietnamese Ministries and Mennonite World Conference news service*

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WORKERS

Custar, Deanna, was ordained May 23 as pastor at Salem Mennonite Church, Waldron, Mich.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bleiler, Ty Benjamin, June 8, to Derek and Meghan Perna Bleiler, Macungie, Pa.

Bontrager, Abigail Rose, April 19, to Lyle and Erin Bontrager, Shipshewana, Ind.

Bontrager, Ethan Michael, June 18, to Terry and Marie Clark Bontrager, Shipshewana, Ind.

Chupp, Eric Matthew, June 25, to Vernon and Irlene Miller Chupp, Arcola, Ill.

Duron, Gracia Nicole, June 19, to Mike and Amy Decker Duron, Wichita, Kan.

Dreidger, Samuel Carlton, June 29, to Jason and Erin Dreidger, St. Louis, Mo.

Eshleman, Lauren Nicole, June 26, to Daryl and Cheryl Eshleman, Lititz, Pa.

Fisher, Elliot Daniel, May 3, to Linford and Jo Wenger Fisher, Boston, Mass.

Friesen, Emily Johanna, May 14, to Karl and Rachel Klassen Friesen, Hesston, Kan.

Hire, Derrick Lee, June 30, to Kyle Hire and Ashley Yoder, Nappanee, Ind.

Hostetler, Sarah Margaret, June 4, to Josh and Melissa Boyer Hostetler, Boswell, Pa.

Klein, Bethany Patricia, June 11, to Tim and Jill Goering Klein, Ponca City, Okla.

Loewer, Olive Margaret Classen, May 10, to Ryan Loewer and Suzanne Classen, Colorado Springs, Colo.

Mast, Simon Eby, July 1, to Randy Mast and Cindy Eby, Denver, Colo.

Mazariegos, Dante Ray, July 2, to Ricardo and Janelle Hurst Mazariegos, Harrisonburg, Va.

Miedel, Sarah Elizabeth, June 1, to Anson and Hannah Miedel, Philadelphia.

Miller, Kina Marie, July 6, to Ben and Nicole Yoder Miller, Kalona, Iowa.

North, Coen Gregory, June 29, to David North and Karyn Gregory, Denver, Colo.

Rush, Lauren Hope, June 29, to Keith and Krista Keim Rush, Sellersville, Pa.

Rychener, Megan Elizabeth and Jenna Christine (twins), March 7, to Ken and Kristen Rensberger Rychener, Lancaster, Pa.

Schmitt, James Micah, June 22, to James and Laura Waidelich Schmitt, Archbold, Ohio.

Steffen, Daniel Roderick, June 20, to Rod and Janice Green Steffen, Frederick, Colo.

Sabulsky, Jessalyn Rayne, June 18, to Richard and Margaret Geissinger Sabulsky, Zionsville, Pa.

Stahl, Christian Michael, June 15, to Jason and Erin Durrie Stahl, Lenexa, Kan.

Tomb, Owen Riley, July 2, to Adam and Elizabeth Haynes Tomb, Davidsville, Pa.

Vachal, Carson Joseph, June 14, to Bradley and Danielle Graber Vachal, Waverly, Neb.

MARRIAGES

Austin/Yoder: Aaron Austin, Sandusky, Ohio, and Rebecca Yoder, Killbuck, Ohio, June 26 at Berlin (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Berry/Birkey: Kyle Berry, Gibson City, Ill., and Sue Birkey, Paxton, Ill., June 5 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Ill.

Christopher/Leichty: Sarah Christopher, Cobbs Creek, Va., and Darrien Leichty, West Liberty, Ohio, June 26 at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

Fox/Troyer: Dustin Fox, Canton, Ohio, and Nicole Troyer, Hartville, Ohio, June 12 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Graber/Greve: Kathryn Graber, Freeman, S.D., and Bret Greve, June 4 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Groff/Mosemann: Paul Groff, Harrisonburg, Va., and Pamela Mosemann, Harrisonburg, June 26 at Ridgeway Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Haaland/Kaufman: Robyn Haaland, Hartford, S.D., and Jeffrey Kaufman, Marion, S.D., May 29 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Hartford.

Hartman/Tatum: Nicholas Hartman, Bridgewater, Va., and Lindsay Tatum, Richmond, Va., July 3 at Bon Air Baptist, Midlothian, Va.

Rupp/Waidelich: Noah Rupp, Archbold, Ohio, and Jodi Waidelich, Archbold, June 26 at St. John's United Church of Christ, Archbold.

Tesch/Waltner: Katie Tesch, Minneapolis, and Lee Waltner, Bridgewater, S.D., May 29 in Minneapolis.

Thomas/Yoder: Brian Thomas, Hollsopple, Pa., and Jean Ann Yoder, Davidsville, Pa., June 26 at Stahl Mennonite Church, Johnstown, Pa.

DEATHS

Gascho, Harry, 91, Goshen, Ind., died June 29. Spouse: Elva F. Newswanger Gascho. Parents: Joseph O. and Jacobina Roth Gascho. Children: Mary Beth Coffey, Timothy, Luke; seven grandchildren. Funeral: July 3 at Greencroft Meetinghouse, Goshen.

Hieser, Margaret, 90, Foosland, Ill., died June 28. Spouse: Vernon Hieser. Parents: David and Nora Wagner Ulrich. Children: Judy Hershberger, Sharon, Ken, Sally Gaff; seven grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 1 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Ill.

Hofstetter, Ward, 87, Orrville, Ohio, died June 22 following a six-month illness. Spouse: Elsie Smith Hofstetter. Parents: Wilson and Lillie Schantz Hofstetter. Children: John, Jim, Diane; three grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: July 4 at Orrville Mennonite Church.

Kauffman, Donald, 73, Apple Creek, Ohio, died June 7 of heart failure. Spouse: Ila Kauffman. Parents: Glenn and Edna Birkey Kauffman. Children: Arlis, Merle, Wendel, Warren: eight grandchildren. Funeral: June 11 at Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

Krall, C. Richard "Dick", 71, West Lafayette, Ohio, died June 3 of heart failure. Spouse: (1st) Mary Jean Krall (deceased), (2nd) Irene Krall. Parents: Carl and E. Ruth Krall. Children: Carl, Michael, Steven; four step-children; nine grandchildren. Funeral: June 8 at First Mennonite Church, Sugarcreek, Ohio.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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NEEDED IN 2005:
MCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This person will lead Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and build understanding and support for its mission among an increasingly diverse constituency.

For a job description or application, please contact search committee chair Donella Clemens, PO Box 64439, Souderton, PA 18964; dmclemens@mindspring.com.

Application review begins Sept. 1, 2004, with a January 2005 appointment and a June 2005 start date.

In 2004, MCC budget was $63 million U.S., with 1,200 people serving in more than 50 countries.

Kulp, Paul O., 84, Sellersville, Pa., died July 7. Spouse: Lenore Laubach Kulp. Parents: Hiram and Esther Ellen Overholt Kulp. Funeral: July 10 at Deep Run East Mennonite Church, Perkasie, Pa.

Leichty, Martha Dix, 83, Grabill, Ind., died June 30. Spouse: Herman Leichty (deceased). Parents: Melville and Florence Dix. Children: Kathleen Spiering, David; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 6 at Hockemeyer Funeral Home, Harlan, Ind.

Martin, Carl Eugene, 61, Centennial, Colo., died June 28 of metastatic thyroid cancer. Spouse: (1st) Delores Thon Martin, (2nd) Karen Hjelmstad Martin. Parents: Alvin and Elva Bowman Martin. Children: Doug Ball, Emily. Funeral: July 5 at First Mennonite Church, Denver, Colo.

Mathely, Betty Jane Smull, 61, Evans, Colo., died June 23 of a heart attack. Spouse: Herman Mathely (deceased). Parents: Lester and Mae Schmehl Smull. Children: Jeff Orosz, Francis Orosz, Melissa Orosz; stepchildren: James, Tina Thrower; 17 grandchildren. Funeral: June 26 at Greeley (Colo.) Mennonite Church.

Nussbaum, Lee, 85, Smithville, Ohio, died June 21. Spouse: Adah Shoup Nussbaum (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Edna Amstutz Nussbaum. Children: Darrel, Delmar, Howard, Myrna Ramseyer, Marge Warkentin, Martha Ramseyer; 17 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 24 at Crown Hill Mennonite Church, Rittman, Ohio.

Pauls, Frieda Dirks, 96, Inman, Kan., died July 2. Spouse: Curt W. Pauls (deceased). Parents: Klaas and Marie Franz Dick. Children: Lester, Donna Pauls Willems, Loren; 12 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 8 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman.

Peachey, Elsie A., 98, Belleville, Pa., died July 1. Spouse: Emanuel B. Peachey (deceased). Parents: Thomas J. and Jemima R. Yoder Peachey. Children: Miriam L. "Mim". Memorial service: July 4 at Locust Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Plett, Jacob, 85, Inman, Kan., died July 6. Spouse: Annie Plett. Parents: Wilhelm Plett and Margaretha Harder. Children: Gary, Margaret Swanner, Janice Claussen; five grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 9 in Inman.

Rocke, Ethel Diebel, 91, Princeton, Ill., died July 2. Spouse: Eldon Rocke (deceased). Parents: John and Margaret Hartman Diebel. Children: Elaine Gerber, Virgil, Jewel Kamita; 13 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 10 at Willow Springs Mennonite Church, Tiskilwa, Ill.

Stutzman, Barbara K. Vogt, 64, Hesston, Kan., died July 6 of cancer. Spouse: Douglass Stutzman. Parents: Harvey O. and Mary Helen Ewy Vogt. Children: David, Kathy Stutzman Ropp, Steven; eight grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 9 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Thiessen, Sara, 83, Inman, Kan., died June 15. Spouse: Abe Thiessen. Parents: George Regehr and Mary Pauls. Children: Shirley Kroeker, Sharon Vannorsdel, Sandy Horton, Carol Lightner, Keri Miller. Funeral: June 18 in Inman.

Voth, Linda Nattier, 54, Goessel, Kan., died June 8 of a heart attack. Spouse: Jerry Voth. Parents: Marion and Ida Nattier. Children: Carolyn, JJ. Funeral: June 12 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Waltner, Homer E., 84, Freeman, S.D., died June 29. Spouse: Martha Fast Waltner. Parents: Edward J.B. and Anna L. Tschetter Waltner. Children: Everett, Geraldine Butkus; seven grandchildren. Funeral: July 2 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

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—Rev. Alex Awad, East Jerusalem Baptist Church

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South Hutchinson Mennonite Church is expanding its pastoral staff team to meet the needs of a growing congregation. We are seeking people gifted, trained and/or experienced in one or more of the following areas: ***children's ministries, Christian education and discipleship training, worship ministry, small group ministries and lay leadership development.*** People interested should submit credentials to Search Committee, SHMC, 808 S. Poplar, South Hutchinson, KS 67505, or shmcoffice@shmc-online.net.

West Clinton Mennonite Church, located in rural northwest Ohio, seeking full-time ***associate pastor.*** Responsibilities include half-time with youth and young adults. For further information contact Marv Leatherman at 419-335-2221 or leather@bright.net.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking applicants for the position of ***director of admissions*** for undergraduate programs. This full-time position requires an individual who can work in a highly visible, goal-oriented environment. The primary responsibility is to lead the admissions team to achieve university enrollment targets through promotional strategies, staff training and motivation, and interaction with campus-wide committees and initiatives. The position reports to the vice president for enrollment and marketing. A bachelor's degree and prior experience in admissions is required. Master's degree preferred. The search committee will begin reviewing applications immediately. Position will remain open until filled.

For more information visit our Web site at www.emu.edu. Send letter of application, resumé and three references to Human Resources Office, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; 540-432-4108 or hr@emu.edu. People who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

Elders' Peace Hostel. Explore with others how to hand on to future generations the things that make for peace! Oct. 10-15. ***Peace skillshops*** held at La Casa de Maria y Marta, San Antonio, Texas. $400 fee includes housing, meals, transportation throughout San Antonio. Limited to 10 couples or 20 individuals. www.salsa.net/lacasa. Call 210-534-2064 for reservations.

Service Opportunities in San Antonio (S.O.S.). Oct. 17-Nov.12, 10 couples (20 individuals) serve together as teams in urban settings—soup kitchens, shelters, inner-city schools, day cares in housing projects, building access ramps for low-income elderly and handicapped. Times of reflection and community living at La Casa de Maria y Marta. $250/individual or $400/couple includes lodging, breakfast, planned itinerary, weekly reflections. www.salsa.net/lacasa. Call 210-534-2064 for reservations.

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Spanish Jubilee Sunday school materials are now available at reduced prices. Also available is ***Centered Teaching,*** a supplement for adapting Jubilee to broadly-graded groups. To order, call Faith & Life Resources: 800-245-7894. Find Spanish materials pricing and a sample session of *Centered Teaching* at www.jubileeonline.org.

Full-time position available at **Mennonite Financial**'s Ephrata, Pa., branch. Primary responsibilities include business development and consumer and small-business lending. Mennonite Financial is a credit union that serves the Anabaptist community in the United States. Contact Sandy Hershey at 800-451-5719, ext. 172; email sandy@mennonitefinancial.com.

In honor of **Thurston Woods Village 50th Anniversary** the Thurston Woods Village board of directors requests the pleasure of your company at the ***open house celebration***, Sunday, Aug. 22, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. There will also be a worship service at 10:30 a.m. and a rededication program at 3:30 p.m. in the main tent.

Director, **Upward Call Counseling Services,** Lancaster, licensed counselor skilled in relating to Old Order Amish and Mennonite community. Call Charles Bauman, 717-355-2117; 150 East Franklin Street, New Holland, PA17557.

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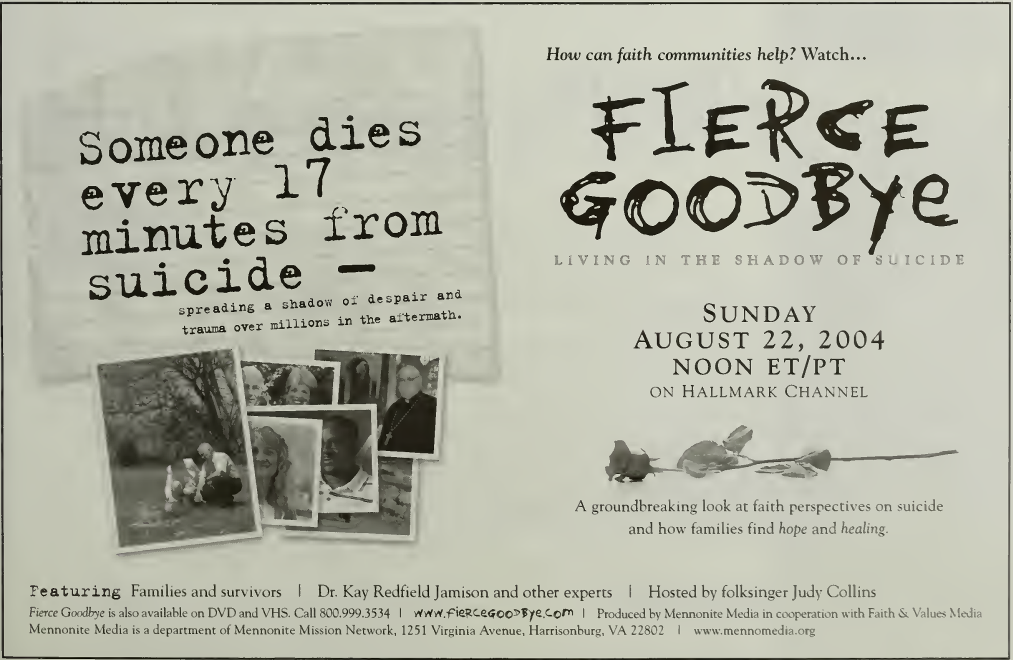

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RESOURCES

The Heart of the Matter: Pastoral Ministry in Anabaptist Perspective, edited by Erick Sawatzky (Cascadia and Herald Press, 2004, $22.95), ponders Anabaptist understandings of such images of the pastor as shepherd, teacher, healer, prophet as well as such issues as leadership, authority, ecclesiology and improvisation in 17 chapters.

Seeking Cultures of Peace: A Peace Church Conversation, edited by Fernando Enns, Scott Holland and Ann K. Riggs (Cascadia and Herald Press, 2004, $22.95), shares conversations among members of the Historic Peace Churches (Mennonites, Quakers and Brethren) in light of the World Council of Churches Decade to Overcome Violence.

How the Bible Came to Be: Exploring the Narrative and the Message by John W. Miller (Paulist Press, 2004, $18.95) shows how an awareness of the factors at play in the Bible's formation during three major historical periods can enrich our understanding of its form and meaning and of the form and message of its major subsections.

The Unseen Face of Islam: Sharing the Gospel with Ordinary Muslims at Street Level by Bill Musk (World Vision Resources, 2003, $15.95) prepares Christians to share their faith with Muslims around the globe. Order from www.worldvisionresources.com.

The God Who Speaks: Learning the Language of God by Ben Campbell Johnson (Eerdmans, 2004, $18) explores the subject of divine speech, highlighting its importance to faith and leading believers into the practice of listening for the voice of God in daily life.

Flannery O'Connor and the Christ-Haunted South by Ralph C. Wood (Eerdmans, 2004, $22) shows how O'Connor's stories, novels and essays impinge on America's cultural and ecclesial condition.

The Prayer of Fire: Experiencing the Lord's Prayer by Lorraine Kisly (Paraclete Press, 2004, $15.95) invites readers to enter a deeper experience of the Lord's Prayer, which John Cassian called "the prayer of fire known to so few."

Nonviolent America, edited by James Juhnke and Louise Hawkley (Mennonite Library and Archives, 2004, $26) is reprinted from the 1993 book that resulted from a conference on "Violence and Nonviolence in American History," held at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. The 20 essays in the book offer a pacifist interpretation of American history as well as critiques of such interpretation. To order call 316-284-5304.

Performing the Faith: Bonhoeffer and the Practice of Nonviolence by Stanley Hauerwas (Brazos Press, 2004, $19.99) revisits Bonhoeffer's claim that if our common life rests on lies and injustice, we cannot be a community of peace.

Bonhoeffer as Martyr: Social Responsibility and Modern Christian Commitment by Craig J. Slane (Brazos Press, 2004, $20.99) argues for Bonhoeffer's historical status as martyr and advocates a more nuanced definition of martyrdom.

Pilgrims in the Kingdom: Travels in Christian Britain by Deborah Douglas and David Douglas (Upper Room Books, 2004, $17) offers spiritual reflections from 16 significant Christian sites in the United Kingdom. It includes black-and-white photos by Joan Myers.

The Eden Peace Witness: A Collection of Personal Accounts by Jeff Koller (Eden Mennonite Church, 2004, $12) compiles 49 stories told by church members recounting how they responded to the call to service in the U.S. armed forces. To order call 620-345-8320 or write edenmc@mtelco.net.

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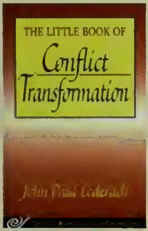
Allan MacRae is Southern Regional Coordinator for Youth Justice in New Zealand, overseeing youth justice for much of the South Island. Howard Zehr is one of the founders of the field of restorative justice and is often called upon to interpret restorative justice in many parts of the world.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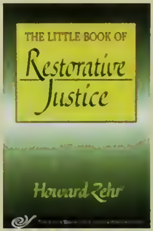
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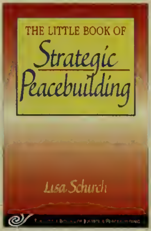
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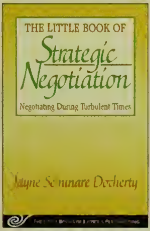
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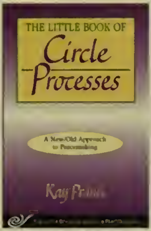
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Gordon Houser

Holy habits

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing those of us who claim to follow Jesus is how to live according to the reality of the kingdom of God. How do we live as if God is in charge? Our main clue is found in Jesus.

Mark says Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming "the good news of God" (1:14b). It was not just a far-off dream but a coming reality.

While many Christians see God's reign as only a future one, our Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Pespective says, "The church is to be a spiritual, social and economic reality, demonstrating now the justice, righteousness, love and peace of the age to come."

Living in the reality that God is in charge, as Jesus preached, is difficult for two main reasons:

1. It's so different from our culture. Look around and see what our culture values: the strong, the wealthy, the good-looking, the self-reliant. And though we like to refer to the evil culture around us, we tend to share those values. We breathe in this culture, and living out a different reality is no small task.

2. It's only visible when we help make it so. We can talk about the present reality of the kingdom of God, but it's difficult to believe in it when we don't see it. It's not obvious to us. The apostle Paul says we need eyes to see this new reality, to see that "there is a new creation … everything has become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

> When we gather each Sunday as a community to worship God together, we are practicing a holy and radical habit.

While we may want God to be in charge, we keep trying to do it ourselves, which is one of the values of our culture.

How did Jesus remain faithful to God's reign, this new way of being? He developed habits of holiness. First, he grew up as a faithful Jew. He learned the Torah, the Hebrew Scriptures, which taught the way of being faithful to God. Second, he practiced prayer, both bringing his struggles to God and listening to God. Third, he obeyed what he heard God saying to do.

The mount of temptation (Luke 4) is one place we see this. Because of his holy habits, he was able to resist the devil, who tried to get him to act according to the way of the world around him, to seek comfort ("bread"), power ("all this authority") and fame ("the pinnacle of the temple").

The next thing Jesus did is significant. He gathered a community of disciples. Jesus was no Lone Ranger. This holy habit is even more important for us today, since we live in a culture that prizes rugged individualism, pulling yourself up by your bootstraps.

When we gather each Sunday as a community to worship God together, learn from God's Word and encourage one another to live lives faithful to God's reign, we are practicing a holy and radical habit. We are proclaiming our allegiance to God rather than country or denomination or even family.

Living according to the reality that God is in charge is difficult. It's not something we can learn overnight. We develop habits by doing something over and over.

My daughter is on our local high school's track team and gymnastics team. She could not simply go out on the track or on the balance beam and perform well without putting in hours and hours of practice.

The same is true of being faithful disciples. We will need to practice the virtues Jesus teaches until they become holy habits.

The U.S. Congregational Life Survey explored the practices of worshipers in more than 2,000 U.S. congregations and came up with 10 strengths: growing spiritually, meaningful worship, participating in the congregation, having a sense of belonging, caring for children and youth, focusing on the community, sharing faith, welcoming new people, empowering leadership and looking to the future.

These strengths represent values that go against the grain of our culture. They develop out of long practice, out of holy habits learned together.

Following Jesus' way of living in the reality that God is in charge is difficult. We need each other to even attempt it. And thank God for forgiveness, because practice always means getting up again after falling down. We won't develop holy habits without holy failures.—*gh*

The Mennonite

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Mennonite retirement communities serve in a variety of ways

a fabric of service

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32 Unretired disciples

Life is too short to pretend

Clarence E. Rempel is a pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Usually I wake up Sunday morning bright-eyed, three to five minutes before either of my two alarms goes off. I'm a pastor, and this is game day, preach-the-Word day. One recent Sunday I popped out of bed like always, but halfway to the shower my back cramped up so badly I could hardly catch my breath. I showered, managed to get dressed, took two Ibuprofen, put on a hot pack and headed for church.

Did I tell my congregation, "I'm really hurting this morning. Pray for me. I'll preach as long as I can"? No. I'm sad to say I didn't. I just pretended I was doing well. I pretend more than I care to admit—that I am a person of good intention and goodwill, that my children are doing great, that I have life under control, all contingencies covered.

Today I confess that life is too short to pretend. Life is too short to hide our concerns, needs, fears or pain. Jesus' opening statement of his kingdom manifesto confirms this: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God" (Matthew 5:3). Jesus says it's OK to have needs. Jesus blesses the "poor in spirit" who call on and trust in God.

" 'Blessed are the spiritually impoverished' speaks to me of an ongoing awareness that never changes," writes Joyce Shutt in *Steps to Hope*. "We remain spiritually poor even as we mature and grow, stop nagging, control our eating compulsions, quit smoking, reconcile with our spouse, learn to control our temper, recover from divorce. Even accepting Christ as Lord and Savior doesn't rescue us from such poverty. … Instead, we live abundantly precisely to the extent we stay in touch with our continuing neediness, doubts, fears, insecurities and emptiness."

When we stop pretending all is fine, we move into the sphere where God can bless us with new perspectives, attitudes, actions, purposes. In Christian circles we call this "being saved." The Psalmist says it this way, "When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears, and rescues them from all their troubles" (Psalm 34:17).

The first blessing asserts, "Admit your pain and need." The second blessing says, "It's good to feel your pain." "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted" (Matthew 5:4). I don't have to pretend happiness.

For what should we mourn? What is good grieving that cooperates with God's blessing?

It's good to grieve for bodies that don't work like they used to. It's OK to feel the sadness of hearing loss, eyesight loss or mobility lost to age, accident or disease.

It's good to grieve the loss of friends and family. My father, Jacob, died two years ago at age 92. In his last years he mourned the losses of life. All his best, lifelong friends had died. His six brothers and sisters had died. All his in-laws had died. His son Robert had died. His first wife died at age 59. His second wife of 26 years had died. He needed to mourn.

It's good to grieve for separations from children and grandchildren because of geography or because of the brokenness in our families.

It's good to grieve my actions that have hurt others. It's good to grieve cutting remarks, ridicule, sarcasm, acts of abuse and endangerment. It's good to grieve my pride, jealousy, selfishness and greed. I like to pretend I don't have any of these problems. After all, I've been a Christian for 40 years, a pastor for 25. I wouldn't be greedy, would I? Why is it that when I eat in a buffet, I pile my plate deep and end up stuffing myself? Life is too short to pretend.

I grieve my own sins, the failures of my spiritual family and the violence and counter violence of our world. As I let the sadness of the brokenness of my life, church and world weigh on my spirit, I experience more of God's forgiveness, grace and hope.

I would like to write more, but my back just cramped up. TM

TheMennonite

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Countercultural worship

Joseph Miller's article "Countercultural Worship" (July 20) is a word that very much needs to be heard. Upon retiring from active ministry I spent a year visiting various churches—Mennonite and others. I observed that some churches were more concerned with being culturally relevant rather than proclaiming a God who transcends culture.

If I were a seeker, I would not be moved by a worship service where the music and lingo is that of the world. The full richness of the Christian message cannot be appreciated if it only reflects the culture around me. Rather I would be drawn to a worship service where the music and the spoken word is something I don't hear and experience every day. If I can sense that in the worshiping community there are faithful people—and the word being preached and the music played and sung is not meant to entertain and please but to inspire and challenge me to walk with God—then I will be drawn to such a congregation because it is an alternative to what I experience every day. In our worship we are called to worship a God that is not a reflection of culture but a God who transcends culture.—*Myron Schrag, Goshen, Ind.*

Urban and rural issues similar

After I read Dorothy Nickel Friesen's "Secondary Terrorism," (July 20), I felt refreshed and wanting to engage in the "spiritual renewal and congregational visioning" she described in order to be a better leader and member of both my local congregation and my wider church.

I am currently in a leadership role in a rural congregation and have been a leader in urban congregations. I believe that both urban and rural churches are dealing with similar issues that may look quite different within each context. I thank Nickel Friesen for pointing out these similarities and also for saying that "letting go of fear and terror" includes uniting the denomination by healing the wounds and stereotypes that exist between rural and urban churches.—*Krista Dutt, La Jara, Colo.*

Cheapening important words

Dorothy Nickel Friesen's "Secondary Terrorism" (July 20) was a good article about the shrinkage of churches but is marred by calling it a kind of "terrorism." Cheapening an important word and shrinking our vocabulary to startle us briefly will have the same long-term effect as calling "Wolf!" too often.

Other Mennonite writers have cheapened the word "violence" by applying it to economic abuse. Some have similarly exaggerated by claiming that real American wrongdoing is as bad as—or worse than—the ongoing and purposeful killing of innocent people by real terrorists. These exaggerations, rather than fear of challenging the White House, may drive some of us away from such a religious group.—*Ronald Rich, Bluffton, Ohio.*

Women of faith

I read with great interest the "Women of Faith" issue (July 6). What a special tribute to women who have demonstrated the extravagant love of God in the way of Jesus Christ and have found themselves maturing spiritually as well!

Last August several of us went on a learning tour to Guatemala, visiting the Mennonite seminary there as well as a number of other mission enterprises. Words fail me to describe how impressed and blessed I felt in touring Bezaleel, the K'ekchi school started by Linda Witmer. The K'ekchi thought education was only for boys and so for a number of years it was an all-boys' school. However, Linda convinced them that girls also needed an education, which they took seriously because they had gained great respect for Linda's counsel.—*Kathrine Rempel, Littleton, Colo.*

Why I became a Mennonite

I identify with Amy Spencer in "Why I Became a Mennonite" (July 6). She did an excellent job of pinning down specific characteristics that draw people to the Mennonite Church. I discovered the Mennonite Church through Bluffton (Ohio) College and am grateful that I have been shaped to see the world in a different way and encouraged to delve deeper into what it means to be a follower of Christ in the world. It is important to be connected to our brothers and sisters in order to share a Mennonite perspective to a world that is thirsty for the truth

IN THIS ISSUE

Mennonite retirement centers are flourishing across Mennonite Church USA, in part because of our special ability to form a strong sense of community wherever we live together. To focus on this phenomenon, we asked free-lance writer Melanie Zuercher to survey six of these institutions and describe what they have in common. The findings: Each has a strong volunteer culture and each has a program to help low-income residents (page 8). Since the Baby Boomer generation (those born between 1946 and 1964) is just beginning to retire, we also asked financial planner Dennis LeFevre to discuss long-term care insurance and the planning that should be done for the retirement years (page 13).

The retirement years are often a time for reflection and introspection. Poet, writer and editor Helen Alderfer's poignant memories of her wedding day 50 years ago are published in a poem on page 15, just months after her husband, Ed, died at age 82 (see page 26).—*Editors* that is in Jesus Christ rather than the power in this world.—*Jaclyn Doner, Americus, Ga.*

Vote for good government

As Christians we are first citizens of heaven, then of the United States, which was settled and began on many Christian principles—although far from perfect. We are commanded to pray for our government. We live in a far different time from when the New Testament was written. In the United States, "We the people" are the government, so that gives us responsibility to work, pray and vote for our leaders and issues.

Look at the candidates: Are they Christian or anti-Christian? Some openly confess and live the Christian faith. What do they stand for? Some are for prayer, the Bible, marriage, abstinence and purity, faith-based programs and vouchers in schools. Others are liberal and go along with Hollywood and the world. They do not believe in absolutes as given in the Bible or in the U.S. Constitution. Basically everything goes: immorality, perversion, partial-birth abortion.

This helps me to pray, work, vote for a good government.—*Wayne Kratzer, Kidron, Ohio*

Other wars than Iraq

Most people agree that war is devastating. War has happened during Republican and Democrat administrations. Much good has happened in Iraq since the old regime was removed, but the mainstream media will not report on it. However, there are other wars going on in this country that are more devastating than the war in Iraq.

1. Abortion: More than 3,000 babies are murdered daily by abortion. Many of them are tortured and killed before delivery. Congress passed a law to ban partial-birth abortion, but it was struck down by an activist judge.

2. Gay rights and gay marriage: Liberal activist federal judges have gone beyond the boundaries of their constitutionally prescribed powers to rewrite the law to give gays the right to marry.

3. Christian rights: Anti-Christian discrimination occurs in our public schools, universities, mainstream media and Hollywood. In the name of "tolerance" and "diversity," it seems all religions and lifestyles are tolerated except Christianity.

A vote in November against the "Iraq war" will be a vote for abortion, gay rights (including gay marriage), the anti-Christian movement and more liberal activist judges being appointed.—*Lorene Gable, Orrville, Ohio*

Wants scholarly articles

I have received and read *The Mennonite* and its predecessor for 23 years. I have followed with interest the trends in reader preference and noted the summary of the 2004 reader survey in Everett J. Thomas' editorial "Honest Answers" (May 4).

In the letters to the editor printed in Readers Say, I see mention (often unfavorably, I admit) of articles of the type of greatest interest to me: those somewhat-scholarly theological discussions or scriptural exegeses such as the series "Difficult Texts in the Bible." I saw no mention of that type of article in the editorial. I hope the lack of reader interest does not inhibit the publication of such items in the future. —*Weeden Nichols, Hays, Kan.*

Call God 'Father'

According to the online poll results (Readers Say, July 20), 64 percent of those responding believe that we should address God as "Father." However, the letters in Readers Say (July 6 and July 20) seem preponderantly against the practice.

According to Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, "We accept the Scriptures as the Word of God and as the fully reliable and trustworthy standard for Christian faith and life."

We believe that we should follow Jesus' teachings. Jesus called God "Father," and he taught his disciples to do so. I believe all the writers of the New Testament epistles called God "Father." What authority do we have for disobeying this teaching?—*Elvina Martens, Elkhart, Ind.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

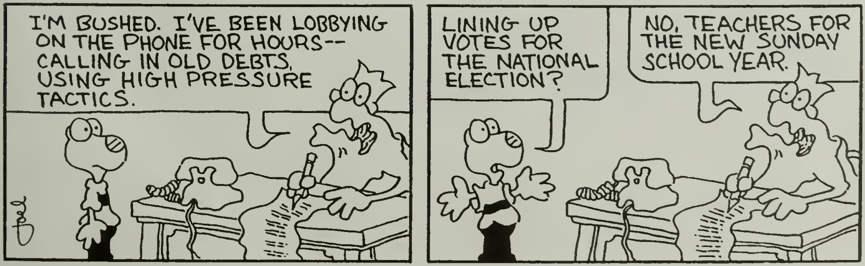
Other Christian denominations are now asking forgiveness for martyring our Anabaptist forebears. Mennonites should:

○ offer forgiveness (77%)

○ consider the request unnecessary (23%)

○ Not sure (0%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org



Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**

I'M BUSHED. I'VE BEEN LOBBYING ON THE PHONE FOR HOURS-- CALLING IN OLD DEBTS, USING HIGH PRESSURE TACTICS.
LINING UP VOTES FOR THE NATIONAL ELECTION?
NO, TEACHERS FOR THE NEW SUNDAY SCHOOL YEAR.
Joel

IN BRIEF

Mennonite pastor sets world record for tallest bike

On June 26, Terry Goertzen, pastor of Jubilee Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, rode the world's tallest bicycle for 300 meters to earn a spot in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. The ride on his 5.5-meter (almost 18-foot) bike well surpassed the 100-meter distance required for the record. The bike is constructed like a ladder and powered by an 11-meter bicycle chain.—*Mennonite Brethren Herald*

Tour de France champion has Mennonite fans

In other biking news, Floyd Landis, a Lancaster County (Pa.) native with a Mennonite background is a teammate of Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong on the U.S. Postal Service cycling team. Landis' parents made the trek to France this year to watch their son race. The Aug. 2 issue of *Sports Illustrated* (p. 42) says: "To Bruyneel's left was Floyd Landis, the former mountain biker from Pennsylvania whose Mennonite relatives Lance Armstrong had pointed out to him two days earlier, while they suffered together up a French Alp called the Col de la Croix Fry. As Armstrong later allowed, 'It's tough to miss eight women in bonnets.'"—*Kent Fellenbaum, Washington Boro, Pa.*

Middle East church leaders condemn attacks

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia—Middle Eastern church leaders condemned attacks on Iraqi churches and called for solidarity following bombings at churches Aug. 1.

Speaking Aug. 2 at the World Council of Churches (WCC) Faith and Order plenary commission meeting, bishop Nareg Alemezian of the Armenian Apostolic Church (Catholicosate of Cilicia) said: "This is the first time Christian churches have been targeted. We condemn this attack and we are very concerned about it."

Metropolitan Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch urged Christians and Muslims to work together for peace. "Solidarity is very important, both inside and outside the region, both among Christians and between Christians and Muslims," he said.

Gregorios stressed that "the WCC and others should encourage anything that brings Christians and Muslims together, not only in theological dialogue but also in the dialogue of life and work."

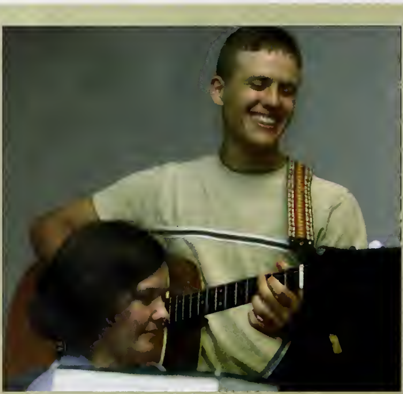
Christian Peacemaker Teams workers in Iraq heard some Iraqi Christians say this was not done by Iraqi Muslims. "We live together with Iraqi Muslims without any problems," said one woman. —*WCC News Service and CPT*

We got game

Dave Taylor, right, coaches three basketball teams as part of youth outreach program in his Philadelphia neighborhood. A left is his brother Darryl, who plays guard on one of the team Taylor is one of 84 Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Summe Service workers serving in their home communities.

Mennonites attend war-tax conference

BRUSSELS, Belgium—The 10th International Conference on War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaigns concluded July 11 in Brussels. Some 70 people from a dozen countries attended. The conference meets biennially to further the efforts of groups working on issues of conscientious objection to military taxation and toward the recognition of the human right to refuse to financially support war and militarism. The conference brings together peace activists from varied regions to make contact, listen to and help each other.



Mennonite Mission Network photo by David Fisher Fast

Making music at mission seminar

Alicia and Steve Horst, a sister-brother team working with Menno Kameleons, rehearse at the annual mission seminar jointly sponsored by Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada, held July 17-23 in Syracuse, Ind., for overseas mission workers. Of this year's 67 participants, 21 were missionary kids.

Conference participants presented detailed updates on war-tax resistance and peace-tax legislation from many countries with histories of these campaigns, such as Belgium, Spain, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Canada.

Mennonites in attendance include Ricardo Esquivia from Colombia and (U.S.) National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund staff members Marian Franz and Timothy Godshall, plus four of its board members.—*Timothy Godshall*

Bridgefolk look at spirituality, discipleship

COLLEGEVILLE, Minn.—Mennonites and Catholics, meeting for their third annual Bridgefolk dialogue at St. John's Abbey, looked at spirituality and discipleship.

Biff Weidman, a Mennonite pastor in Elkhart, Ind., spoke about his own journey from 1960s' activism to self-described "monkishness," while Abbot Eoin de Bhaldraithe, a Trappist from Ireland, related some of what caused him to move from only contemplation to action when "the Troubles," the violent conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland, began in the late 1960s.

A significant part of the July 29-Aug. 1 meeting comprised hearing from participants in the six-year dialogue sponsored by Mennonite World Conference and the Vatican, which resulted in the document "Called Together to Be Peacemakers." Bridgefolk participants talked about ways it could be shared with congregations and parishes.

As in previous years, the meeting included "Mennonite singing," led by Ken Nafziger of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.; opportunity to participate in the St John's Benedictine community's liturgy of the hours; and an agape meal and footwashing service for Bridgefolk participants.—*Melanie Zuercher*

Dirk Willemszstraat
DIRK WILLEMS
Martyred: 1569

Marshall V. King

Watching for Willems

Visitors at Menno-Hof in Shipshewana explore a new exhibit on Dirk Willems, an early Anabaptist martyr. The exhibit is the first entirely new exhibit at the visitors center since it opened in the late 1980s.

Missionaries continue ministry in retirement

SYRACUSE, Ind.—This month, two Mennonite Mission Network couples who have dedicated their lives to mission will move into what they hope will be a more relaxed ministry mode.

Betty and Otis Hochstetler and Chris and Lois Leuz discussed their retirement plans over a meal during the joint mission seminar sponsored by Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness.

The Hochstetlers, missionaries in Brazil since 1966, anticipate serving the Brazilian Mennonite church from Brasilia, the country's capital city.

Chris and Lois Leuz have served in Vietnam, the former Zaire—now the Democratic Republic of Congo, Taiwan and China. Chris is a medical doctor and Lois a registered nurse. Lois also has been involved in teaching, pastoral care and counseling.

"We see retirement as continuing ministry in another place," Lois says. That place will be Hickory, N.C., where their two daughters live.
—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Courtesy photo

Pennsylvania youth do service work and outreach in Northern Ireland

The senior high youth group (21 students and eight adults) at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church spent July 6-15 in Northern Ireland in connection with a ministry called Project Evangelism at Murlough House in the village of Dundrum. This ministry serves the children and youth of the Dundrum and Newcastle areas by sponsoring soccer camps and leagues, coffee houses, children's stories and crafts, and outdoor challenge sessions (hiking, rock climbing).

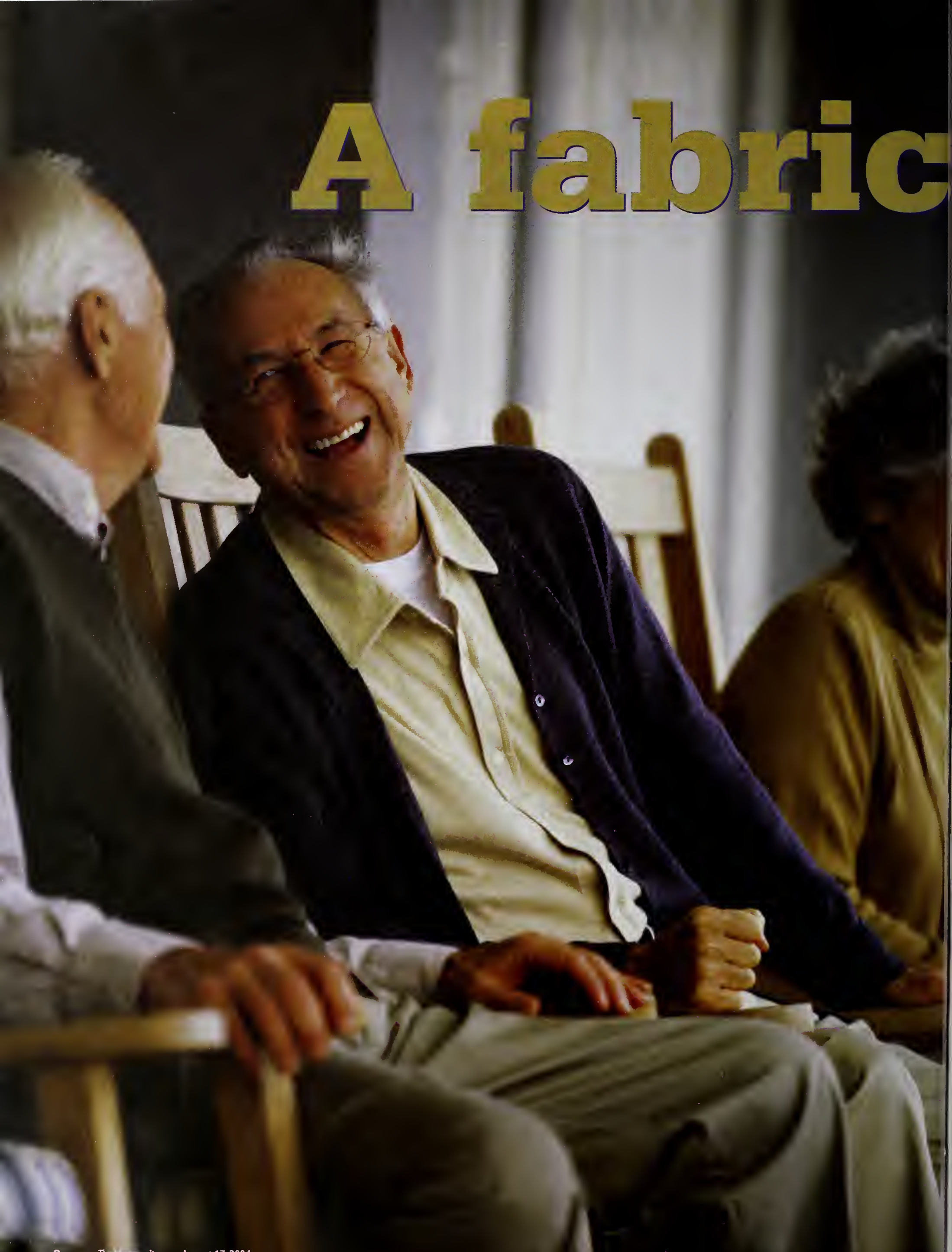
IN BRIEF

CPT supports boycott of Coca-Cola in Colombia

On July 22, eight Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) delegation members from Georgia, Kansas, New York, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., and Ontario joined members and supporters of SINALTRAINAL in a public witness calling for a worldwide boycott of Coca-Cola products. SINALTRAINAL is the name of the union representing Coca-Cola bottling workers in Colombia. The supporters of this boycott maintain that Coca-Cola in Colombia has systematically undermined workers' efforts to earn a fair living wage, replacing most of its employees with non-union employees and temporary workers, many of whom only earn the country's minimum wage of $119 per month.
—*CPT*

MCC video on Iraq wins film award

Iraq: Emerging Voices, a video produced by Mennonite Central Committee in 2003, won a CINE Golden Eagle Award this spring. The 21-minute video features interviews with Baghdad residents two months after the U.S.-led invasion and the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. Other award recipients included major television networks and media companies.—*MCC News Service*



A fabric

# of service

Mennonite retirement communities are committed to service in many forms.

by Melanie Zuercher

It's probably no surprise that Mennonite retirement communities—like most Mennonite institutions—reflect the strong Anabaptist value of service to others. What may come as a surprise is how deeply knit into the fabric of these communities service is—not only on the part of residents but staff, community and supportive congregations.

Landis Homes, located on 100 acres that were once two farms near Lititz, Pa., was founded 40 years ago as a home for retired missionaries. "We have always had a commitment to provide for people involved in mission or pastoral work," says Ed Longenecker—who, in his 27th year as president, is only the second administrator to serve the facility.

Glencroft, in Glendale, Ariz., located in the densely populated "Valley of the Sun" that includes Phoenix, is not a unique institution in this popular retirement destination. What is unusual about Glencroft, says CEO Jay Shetler, "is that we're trying to reach a lower- and lower-middle-income clientele, to serve the broad needs of the community. We probably have the highest Medicaid population of any of the Mennonite retirement communities. It's more of a peace and social justice issue, and I think it distinguishes us from most of the faith-based nonprofits in this area, which tend to be higher-end and more expensive."

All six of the Mennonite retirement communities examined in this article have federally subsidized rental housing units as one of their living options.

Another characteristic common to all of them, which helps distinguish them from non-Anabaptist peer facilities, is the strong volunteer culture within each.

All six of the Mennonite retirement communities examined in this article have federally subsidized rental housing units as one of their living options. Another characteristic common to all of them is the strong volunteer culture within each.

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

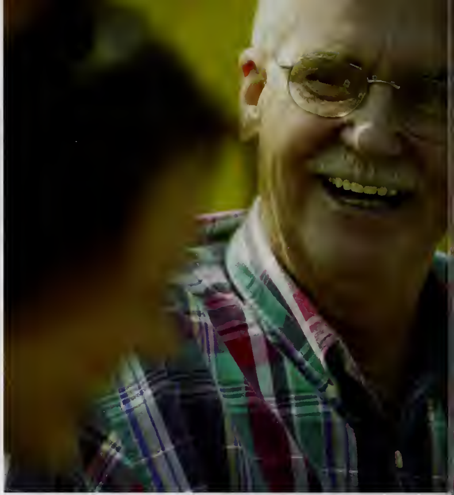
Intergenerational: At Schowalter Villa in Hesston, Kan., volunteerism is intentionally intergenerational. Schowalter recently broke ground for a new child-care center that will be attached to its skilled nursing and assisted living facility.

In addition, Lillian Claassen, vice president for health services, points to the relationship that "the Villa" has with adjacent Hesston College. Dwight Roth, professor of sociology at the college, has for several years been giving credit in some of his classes for student volunteer work at Schowalter.

"This kind of thing helps students recognize how service can be meaningful and how much they can give in relatively small ways," Claassen says. "It helps set a pattern for their lives."

Schowalter CEO James Krehbiel adds, "People here have a mission focus. For many of the staff, this is their ministry—instead of serving overseas, they are called to work with older people in their own communities."

Ron Yoder, president and CEO of Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, Harrisonburg, Va., sees similar qualities in his staff. "When I meet a new employee and ask, 'Why did you come to work at VMRC?,' I consistently hear three things: 'I've heard about or experienced this as a caring community.' 'I've heard or observed or experienced that VMRC places a very high value on quality of care.' '[Because of the ratio of staff to residents] I can really serve the residents here—we aren't stretched too thin.'"



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Schowalter Villa
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"It's much more than just the volunteer time which is tremendous," says Gene Yoder, CEO of Greencroft in Goshen, Ind. "The service mentality is in our staff, too, above and beyond a 40-hour week."

All these retirement communities have active volunteer forces—the majority are residents, and there are well-established auxiliaries that include nonresidents as well. For Kidron Bethel Village in North Newton, Kan., its five supporting congregations (all Mennonite; one in North Newton and four in Newton) are essential.

"It's a heritage from our Mennonite faith," says Kidron Bethel CEO Rich Heim. His facility is the oldest of the six surveyed here—it was founded in 1926 as Bethel Home for the Aged, the first such institution in Harvey County, Kan. "We have always connected with the churches, as part of their mission."

Landis Homes, as a mission of Lancaster Mennonite Conference, has more than 100 congregations who support the facility in some way. "There are many folks who come in and quietly support our program and enhance the lives of the residents," says Longenecker.

"Many of [our residents and volunteers] have worked in voluntary or mission service," he adds. "They have grown up supporting our retirement communities [through the church]. Our culture fosters the servant-serving motif."

Glencroft—of the six located in the largest metropolitan area with the smallest number of Mennonite congregations—has an unusual asset in

What most distinguishes Mennonite retirement communities seems to be the commitment to service, in a myriad of forms.

the form of SOOP (Service Opportunities for Older People). SOOP, a program of Mennonite Association for Retired Persons, Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Central Committee Canada, allows retirees who spend the winter in the Phoenix area to give their time to three service projects, including Glencroft.

Volunteer leaders: Shetler praises the volunteer leaders who help coordinate SOOP's activities in the Valley. "We really have a tradition of volunteerism [as Mennonites]," he says. "I don't see it as much in other faith-based retirement facilities—it isn't in their mission statements or encouraged in their staff [as is true here]."

Part of Greencroft's mission statement talks about "being dedicated to Christian service in all endeavors, in keeping with our Mennonite heritage and philosophy," says John Bender, public relations

Continued on page 12

Mennonite retirement communities

The following Mennonite retirement centers are members of Mennonite Health Services Alliance:

With more than 99 years of service, **United Zion Retirement Community** in Lititz, Pa., offers living arrangements from cottages to apartments to personal care suites to skilled-nursing care. For additional information, please check the Web page at **www.uzrc.org.**

AuSable Valley Community is a continuing-care retirement community in northeast Michigan with more than 150 seniors in independent living homes and apartments, assisted-living suites and residential skilled-nursing care.

Welsh Mountain Home is embarking on a $4 million expansion of its assisted-living units. We serve many economically disadvantaged older adults and dependent people. Contact Harold Yoder at **717-355-9522.**

Greencroft Retirement Communities, P.O. Box 819, Goshen, IN 46527-0819, 574-537-4000, was founded in 1962. Greencroft provides housing, health-care and hospitality services, serving people of all economic levels. More than 20 faith groups are represented among its 1,200-plus residents. For more information, visit our Web site, **www.greencroft.org.**

Pleasant View, Inc. in Virginia is not a retirement home, but we offer services to adults with developmental disabilities. Once adults enter our services, we offer a lifetime of support and care. We also offer one house for people who have retired from day services.

Bethesda Home, Goessel, Kan., has served the elderly and disabled since 1899. Bethesda provides a full continuum of care including 27 Independent-living units, 10 assisted-living apartments, and 57 nursing-care beds, including a 12-bed special-care unit for those with Alzheimer's and other dementia. For more information, visit **www.bethesdahome.org.**

Community Home Services in Souderton, Pa., helps seniors remain at home throughout their aging years. CHS provides personal care, homemaking, transportation and a staff chaplain. CHS works closely with congregational sharing funds, long-term care insurance plans and provides benevolence based upon income.

For more than 50 years, **Prairie View** has worked with older adults experiencing emotional difficulties. Prairie View provides outpatient services, partial hospitalization, inpatient hospitalization, education and consultation. Services are provided by a multidisciplinary staff trained to work with older adults and their families or caregivers. To see specific information go to **www.prairieview.org.**

Garden Spot Village is in eastern Lancaster County, Pa., near New Holland, and offers a blend of town and country living. Founded in faith, our mission is to enrich the lives of older adults. For more information, visit our Web site, **www.gardenspotvillage.org,** or call **717-355-6000.**

Fairview Fellowship Home has been serving seniors in Major County, Okla., and surrounding areas since 1961. We have 126 Medicare/Medicaid-certified nursing-home beds and 36 independent-living apartments. Our goal is meet each individual's personal care needs.

Sierra View Homes in Reedley, Calif., offers apartments for independent living, assisted living and full nursing care. Participate in social, cultural and religious activities, and enjoy the new wellness center featuring an indoor pool, spa and recreational facilities.

Rockhill Mennonite Community is a continuing-care retirement community that provides a wide range of services to meet physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs in an atmosphere of Christian love.

Menno Haven Retirement Communities serves 1,000 older adults by providing retirement housing, health-care and related services on three campuses in Chambersburg, Pa. These services include independent retirement living, assisted living, skilled-nursing care, an adult day care and Menno Haven physician services.

Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community in Harrisonburg, Va., is a culturally diverse and intellectually stimulating community offering everything from independent living to nursing-home care. Amenities include fully-equipped wellness center, indoor pool, masseuse, walking trails and educational programs. Visit us online at **www.vmrc.org** or contact us at **888-564-VMRC.**

Mennonite Manor is a faith-based continuing care community featuring independent living, assisted living and 24-hour skilled nursing. We offer one- and two-bedroom apartments and duplex homes, maintenance-free living and on-site health care. For more information call Joanne Rogers or Erin Kennedy at **620-663-7175.**

Frederick Mennonite Community is a family-oriented continuing-care retirement community in scenic northwestern Montgomery County, Pa. Frederick has independent-living apartments and cottages, one-bedroom assisted-living apartments, an Alzheimer's residence and compassionate skilled-nursing care on campus. For information, contact **nmelwert@frederick-mennonite.org, www.frederick-mennonite.org** or **610-754-7878.**

A strong focus of the residents of the city of Reedley, Calif., where **Palm Village Retirement Community** is located, is to show compassion to the seniors living at Palm Village. Family togetherness is encouraged, and the beauty and strength of everyone in the community coming together is always obvious.

One of the biggest challenges facing Mennonite Church USA in the next 20 years is how we are going to respond to the needs of older adults.—Ron Yoder

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director. "As people age, life takes on a new meaning, but they still want to be of service to others." He has noticed "one committed group of residents who have been helping feed other residents two meals a day, day in and day out, for years."

Members of auxiliary groups hold annual fundraisers—garage sales, golf tournaments, quilt auctions, German breakfasts and gala dinner concerts. They quilt lap robes. They drive shuttle buses. They push wheelchairs to take residents to meals, the beauty shop, concerts, chapel services and doctor appointments. They read to residents, carry their trays in the dining room and lead games, crafts activities and Bible studies.

As faith-based and church-based institutions, all the communities examined here see spiritual life as an important health component for their residents. All have one or more chaplains, part-time and full-time, on staff. "Even in tight financial times, we wouldn't consider dropping our full-time chaplain," says Lillian Claassen of Schowalter Villa.

Glencroft residents have gone so far as to start their own church—nondenominational, with a full-time pastor they pay themselves and missionaries they support regularly .

Holistic health: Spiritual wellness is only one part of holistic health, something that more and more medical facilities see as worthy of significant attention. All six retirement communities have wellness centers. Four are within easy reach of Mennonite colleges—Greencroft (Goshen College), VMRC (Eastern Mennonite University), Kidron Bethel (Bethel College) and Schowalter Villa (Hesston College). Some have organized programs connected to the colleges, such as the Kidron Bethel-Bethel College Life Enrichment program or Greencroft-Goshen College's Elder/College.

"Community and college connections are important at Schowalter," says James Krehbiel. "Many of our residents have gone to school with each other." Kidron Bethel's Rich Heim points out that the connection with Bethel College gives even residents in subsidized housing educational opportunities they probably could not afford at other facilities.

In the end, what most distinguishes Mennonite retirement communities seems to be the commitment to service, in a myriad of forms. "We work hard at excellent care," says Landis Homes' Longenecker, "although of course we don't have a monopoly on that."

The kind of service that Mennonite retirement communities provide is only going to become more important, says VMRC's Yoder. "One of the biggest challenges facing Mennonite Church USA in the next 20 years," he says, "is how we are going to respond to the needs of older adults. Over half of baby boomers aren't prepared financially for retirement. It's a long-standing Anabaptist value—to give aid and attention to those who have less than they need."

"Mennonites have built and now run some of the finest retirement and care facilities in the country," says Glencroft's Shetler. "They are well-run and mission-driven." It's a mission that will only become more urgent in the years to come. TM

Melanie Zuercher is writer/editor in the communications office of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and a member of Shalom Mennonite Church in Newton.

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How to finance your retirement

Taking action on healthy living, long-term care and retirement income will help in the long run.

by Dennis LeFevre

CLEO Photographs

One of the more challenging questions I get from my clients as they approach retirement is, "Will I run out of money?" The answer is not easy because there are so many variables that can come into play: How long will you live? What health challenges will you have? What will happen to interest rates and stock and bond investment returns? Do you plan to work part-time in retirement? Many of these variables can be influenced by how we plan, but they cannot be controlled 100 percent.

Healthy living: For many of us, the largest financial train wreck is the unknown cost of medical and health care. During retirement, health-care costs as a percentage of total income can increase significantly. The combination of our bodies getting older and our lack of healthy lifestyles cause health-care costs to increase as we get older. At the same time, we often experience decreased earnings in retirement. These factors all contribute to the potential train wreck.

The risk of having health challenges decreases significantly if we lead active and healthy lives before and during retirement. By eating healthily, exercising regularly and controlling our weight, we can minimize the risks of poor health. However, some health conditions are not mitigated by healthy lifestyles.

Unfortunately as North Americans, we've become lazy and irresponsible for our health. We need to begin viewing active, healthy lifestyles before retirement as an investment in our bodies that will pay off in a more enjoyable and satisfying retirement.

From a financial viewpoint, several options can be considered to minimize the damage. Certainly eating healthily and exercising regularly throughout our life will help.

Long-term care: Beginning at age 45 or 50, you should educate yourself about long-term care (LTC) insurance. This is a tool with which you can trade a known cost (premium) for an unknown risk (future cost of care). The premiums are based on age, and you must qualify based on your health.

We need to begin viewing active, healthy lifestyles before retirement as an investment in our bodies that will pay off in a more enjoyable and satisfying retirement.

Beginning this program when you are healthy and younger means that though you will pay premiums for a longer time, the overall cost (since premiums are lower at younger ages) will likely be less over your lifetime.

Another caveat of LTC insurance: Just as fire insurance is more difficult (impossible) to purchase the morning after your home has burned to the ground, LTC insurance is more difficult (and more expensive, if available) after you have experienced a health challenge.

Focus on learning about LTC from a trusted adviser. There is more to the decision than choosing the plan with the lowest premium. Since claims for care will not be incurred for 20 or more years, it is important to deal with an adviser and a company you know and trust. Unfortunately, studies show that over 68 percent of LTC purchases are from

Continued on page 14

Many times it is easier to do nothing on the issues of healthy living, long-term care and retirement income. However, doing nothing rarely fixes the problem.

Continued from page 13

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strangers. When you have questions and need claims paid, you will want the agent and the company to still be around.

Retirement income: Concentrating on saving for retirement is also important. If your employer offers a match on contributions for retirement, you should capitalize on this important tool. The increased leverage from employer matches in 401(k) and simple IRA programs means you reach your goals quicker.

Another area of retirement preparation is properly arranging your investments. With retirement lasting 20 and 30 years past our earning period, decisions here are important. Many times, we err on the side of conservative investing. While this is successful in conserving principal, it may significantly increase the chances of outliving your income.

One of the most misunderstood retirement income tools is the annuity. Almost everyone knows of a relative who had an annuity but when they died had nothing left for the heirs. When too much is annuitized, heirs are left out. Herein lies the need to understand the financial tool and deal with a trusted financial adviser.

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Think of the annuity as a savings accumulation account that can be converted to an income stream you cannot outlive.

In many ways an annuity functions like the reverse of a life insurance policy. Under a life insurance policy, an insured's loved ones are protected from financial ruin when the insured dies early. Under an annuity, the annuitant and his loved ones are protected from financial ruin when the annuitant (or a couple) lives beyond his (their) expectation of life.

In determining how much of a retirement income to annuitize, each case will require a different solution. Analyzing which expenses are expected to continue until death, and then matching those expenses to an annuitized income stream, will help ensure that the chances of outliving your income will be minimized.

A study reported in the October 2001 issue of *The Journal of Financial Planning*, conducted by two scholars, demonstrates that portfolios of stocks, bonds and cash all exposed the owner to a significant chance of running out of money before their death. The chance of running out of money ranged from 8 percent with aggressive portfolios to 67 percent for those holding conservative portfolios. Few retired people desire to hold their retirement funds in an aggressive portfolio. The study showed that by taking half of one's retirement income and putting it into an annuity, the risk of running out of money dropped from 67 percent (with the conservative portfolios) to 19 percent. Annuitizing one-fourth of the retirement dropped the chance from 67 percent to 47 percent.

Therefore, introducing annuities to your retirement portfolio can significantly reduce the chance of outliving your financial resources. Like LTC insurance, annuities and annuitization of principal should not be entered into without understanding your present financial position and how the tool can help be part of the solution.

Where to begin: Many times it is easier to do nothing on the issues of healthy living, long-term care and retirement income. However, doing nothing rarely fixes the problem. Do your part to gather information from your trusted financial advisers. Visit with your attorney, accountant, insurance agent and investment counselor to learn more about the options available to you. Then, after educating yourself on the options, take action that is appropriate for your situation.

Dennis LeFevre, is a Certified Financial Planner™ and MMA Counselor in Hesston, Kan.

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The wedding day
(August 12, 1944)

by Helen Alderfer

On this sunny August day Chicory and Queen Anne's Lace
grace the Illinois roadside.
Red-winged blackbirds call o-ka-leee
in a ripening field of grain.
I ride to the little white church,
the church of my parents and grandparents.
On this golden day I am about to marry my heart's desire.

We stand before the people, not touching, like strangers.
The old minister in his rusty black plain suit
delivers a weary message often given before.
"Hurry, hurry." I want to say.
"We want to begin living happily ever after."
Then come the admonishments to care for each other
in sickness and in health.
We have no imagination for sickness, never having been ill.
And my almost husband has spent the summer following the wheat harvest
from Texas to Colorado. He is tanned and fit.
We answer "I will" glibly and innocently;
we cannot know the great joys and great sorrows that await us.

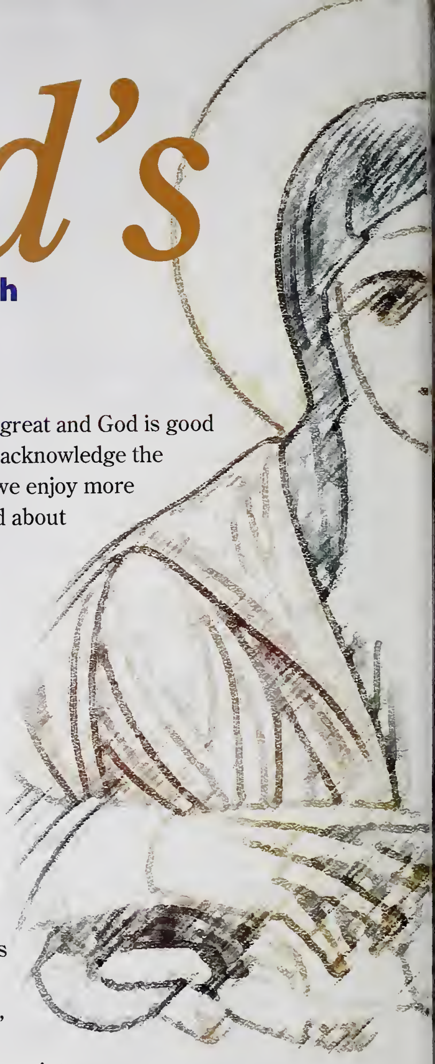
Finally we sit down to the wedding dinner.
I announce that I am very hungry.
A wedding guest says primly, "You are not supposed to be hungry."
But I am hungry, hungry for the lovely dinner,
for our wedding night, for our life together.
My new husband and I hold hands under the table
covered with the chaste white linen tablecloth.

Helen Alderfer is a member of College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

God's

Lessons from Julian of Norwich

by Barbara Esch Shisler



At mealtime, some of us pray, "God is great and God is good and we thank God for our food." We acknowledge the greatness and generosity of God as we enjoy more food than we need. Another "g" word about God is "glad." God is glad and God is good.

Psalm 46:4a says, "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God." This glad city, where God is in the midst, lightens my heart on days when the darkness of this world seems overwhelming.

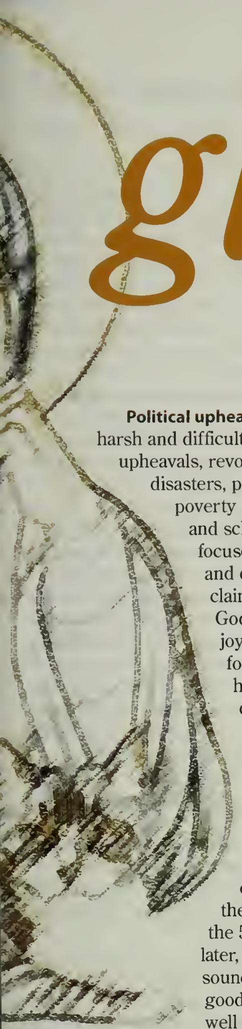
Julian of Norwich also encourages me with her glad visions. An unknown woman, born in England in 1342, she came near death at age 30. As her sight failed and her body numbed, she prepared to die. Suddenly, as she described it later, "All my pain was taken from me, and I was as whole as ever I was afore." She saw that God overcomes all evil, and this insight released such glad emotions in her that she burst into laughter, and those around her bed were moved to laugh as well.

Julian saw that God overcomes all evil, and this insight released such glad emotions in her that she burst into laughter, and those around her bed were moved to laugh as well.

During her illness she saw visions and heard words from God. She recovered quickly and dedicated her life to prayer and writing down her "Revelations of Divine Love." Her name was given by the church she entered as an anchorite to live in a cell in solitude and prayer, a solitude often broken by the pilgrims who came to her for counsel.

One pilgrim, Margery Kempe, reported the advice Julian gave her. Margery was much criticized for leaving her 14 children to travel about preaching and testifying in a loud, unladylike manner. Julian told Margery to be obedient to the will of God and to fulfill with all her might whatever God put into her soul if it was not against the worship of God and profit of her fellow Christians.

gladness



Political upheavals: Julian lived in a harsh and difficult age with political upheavals, revolts and wars, natural disasters, plagues, hunger and poverty along with the fighting and schisms of a church focused on sin, damnation and death. Her visions proclaimed something new. God's goodness and love, joy in creation and mercy for all are wrapped up in her most famous benediction, "And all shall be well, and all shall be well, and every manner of thing shall be well."

Her humility underwrites her words. "The revelations were showed to a simple creature, unlettered, in the year of our Lord 1373, the 5th of May." Centuries later, what she says about evil sounds solid. She asked, "Ah, good Lord, how might all be well for the great hurt that is come by sin to the creation?"

Her understanding of the answer is that we are defeated by the evil when we use only reason and logic and do not have faith in the heart of God, a God "glad and merry and sweet in the blessed and lovely demeanor of our Lord toward our souls."

I like to watch the expressions on the faces of the parents of newborns. Delight and joy, pride and the purest love shine for this helpless creature. That is what Julian saw in God's face turned toward us. Little and weak as we are, we have been "formed … knit together" in our mothers' womb, as God's wonderful work (Psalm 139).

Julian saw a little thing too, a hazelnut, a tiny ball in the palm of her hand.

"I asked, 'What may this be?' The answer was, 'It is all that is made.' I marveled at how it could last, being so small. And I was answered, 'It lasteth and ever shall last because God loveth it.'"

Romans 8 describes the creation as waiting with eager longing for the healing and redemption God intends for it. This glad God knows when and how it will happen, and is already happening, but the Bible pictures God's playful delight in his creation in the midst of what has gone wrong:

"You set the beams of your chambers on the waters,

"you make the clouds your chariot,

"you ride on the wings of the wind" (Psalm 104).

God's gladness in creation contrasts painfully with the way we have caused it harm. The spoiling of earth, air and water from reckless and greedy use stands condemned before God's joy. If we were to understand how much God loves not only us but all creation, we might better act in ways that honor God's pleasure.

If we were to understand how much God loves not only us but all creation, we might better act in ways that honor God's pleasure.

A sign of God's love: I once had a curly little dog named Julian because I claimed Julian's words for my Yorkie: "All things hath being by the love of God." This little dog had no useful function but to make me laugh and feel happy. She was an icon, a sign of God's love that reminded me that I, too, small and often silly, am precious in God's eyes. We were both given life by the pleasure of God.

Julian's world was filled with sin, sorrow and tragedy, much like ours. Yet her visions were filled with hope in the goodness of God. "For as the body is clad in the cloth and the flesh in the skin and the bones in the flesh and the heart in the whole, so are we, soul and body, clad in the goodness of God and enclosed."

God is glad and God is good even in our world today. And we are enclosed in that goodness by God's unfailing and eternal mercy.

Barbara Esch Shisler is a member of Perkasie (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Trust: from the head to the heart

Kenyetta Aduma is director of Mennonite Church USA Executive Board Office of Intercultural Relations.

Sometimes it is a challenge to get things from our head to our heart. We can read the Bible or hear a message, but if we do not internalize what we hear or read, it may not have the intended result.

The issue of trust is a good example. The word in the Bible often refers to trusting God. We probably have several of these passages memorized. But what do we do when problems come or when we are seeking God's direction in a situation or dealing with everyday realities or in relating to others?

When we internalize what God's Word says about trusting God, we do not get impatient and try to handle things on our own. Neither do we lose hope. Nan Williams, a minister at the church I attend, defines trust as waiting patiently and expectantly for God (Psalm 40:1-5).

It is difficult to trust God and move from head knowledge of his Word to heart knowledge when we do not know God. Trusting God involves a close relationship with him. We have to spend quality time with God daily and get to know him intimately. The exciting thing for me is always learning new things about God and seeing some of the things he is doing. I never want my relationship with God to stop growing. I want God to continue to reveal things to me about him. I seek to wait patiently and expectantly for God in every situation, and as my relationship with him continues to go to new levels, my trust will, too.

As a church we also are to wait patiently and expectantly in our leadership roles, administration or committees. We have to stay focused on trusting and depending on God and not people, skills, processes or other resources. In our calling as a body of believers, we can grow together in our levels of trust.

Just as our trust in God grows as our relationship with him grows, so our trust with one another will be built and grow as we develop relationships and genuinely get to know one another. It is one thing to know what the Word says about the body of Christ (how we are to be one and dependent on one another), but we have to get it in our heart; it has to become a conviction of ours. If it is in our heart, it will move us to action.

As a church, we have had a commitment and a passion in sending people to other countries for long-term assignments to build relationships and serve. These assignments often involve relating with other racial-ethnic groups, spending quality time together and living among the people being served. Lifetime relationships sometimes are formed where trust is built, and these relationships sometimes expand to a congregation-to-congregation relationship. This may seem simplistic, since there also are times when we offend people from the other countries, and relationships and trust is not built. This shows the need for sensitivity and ensuring that neither racial nor paternalistic attitudes are carried. One's level of relationship with God affects one's relationships with others. As trust is built, racial barriers should come down; we should begin to interact with one another based on trust and our love relationship with God.

> **I pray we will make changes in our structures so that we can benefit from the different racial-ethnic groups within our denomination.**

Do we have the desire to do what it takes to develop good relationships? Has God's Word moved from the head to the heart? Are we ready to work on relationships between different racial-ethnic groups here in the United States? We serve and develop relationships across the world, and I pray we will make an even greater commitment to developing relationships with other racial-ethnic groups in our own city, in neighboring communities, within our state and outside our state.

The name "Intercultural Relations" as a ministry of Mennonite Church USA executive leadership was chosen to reflect the races, ethnicities and cultures in relationship with one another and among the various entities of Mennonite Church USA and the various racial-ethnic groups. I pray we will make changes in our structures so that we can benefit from the different racial-ethnic groups within our denomination. I pray we will have trust-filled relationships where there is transparency, openness and a desire to truly be one body. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Communities pursuing Christ's purpose: a new series**—Laurie L. Oswald
- **CPT turns 20**—Melanie Zuercher
- **Tragic zeal**—Darrin W. Belousek

Paraguay chosen for 2009 MWC Assembly

Mennonite World Conference Executive Committee makes unanimous decision.

Assembly 15, the next Mennonite World Conference global gathering will be held in Paraguay in mid-July, 2009. The MWC Executive Committee reached unanimous agreement on the site at its annual meeting July 29-Aug. 4 in Strasbourg, France.

Committee members considered two strong invitations to host Assembly 15. One came from eight Mennonite conferences in Paraguay, with a mix of members from Spanish-speaking, German-speaking and indigenous language groups.

The second invitation, to host the assembly in Eastern Pennsylvania, came from the Brethren in Christ General Conference, Mennonite Church USA and the U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

Larry Miller, MWC executive secretary, and Ray Brubacher, associate secretary for events and administration, conducted studies of both locations in May. They reported that a global gathering in either country was feasible.

What tipped the balance in favor of Paraguay, after much discussion, reflection and prayer, was that it seemed it was Latin America's turn. The last assembly in the region was in Brazil in 1972.

Before current executive members complete their terms at Assembly 15, they will have begun preliminary planning for Assembly 16. They encouraged the U.S. member conferences and the Pennsylvania group to consider offering an invitation for that assembly in 2015.

Mennonites in Europe have suggested that an assembly be held in Europe in 2025, the 100th anniversary of the first MWC gathering and the 500th of the first Anabaptist baptism. Both events happened in Europe.

To consider that request, dates for assemblies between 2009 and 2025 would need to be adjusted, since the global gatherings are normally held every six years.

The executive members made the decision on the Assembly 15 site by consensus, a change from traditional voting. Nancy R. Heisey, MWC president, introduced the concept and process of consensus early on the first meeting day. She noted the importance of "getting the sense of the meeting."

Led by Heisey and vice-president Danisa Ndlovu (Zimbabwe) interest in the new model grew with discussion, and executive members agreed to try it. All subsequent decisions in the weeklong meeting were made by consensus.—*Ferne Burkhardt of MWC News Service*

Mennonites in Europe have suggested that an assembly be held in Europe in 2025, the 100th anniversary of the first MWC gathering and the 500th of the first Anabaptist baptism.

Goshen College president resigns

Showalter, president since 1997, takes role with Fetzer Institute.

Goshen (Ind.) College president Shirley H. Showalter has resigned her position in order to join the Fetzer Institute of Kalamazoo, Mich. Showalter, the first woman appointed to head the 110-year-old institution, will end her service in the fall semester.

Goshen College board of directors chair Virgil Miller and Mennonite Education Agency executive director Carlos Romero announced the resignation on Aug. 3. A special board meeting is set for Aug. 18 to establish a transition timeline, approve an interim leadership plan and determine the process for identifying gifts and qualities of a new president.

Showalter was named president in 1996 and began her tenure as the college's 14th president on Jan. 1, 1997. Prior to accepting the post as president, she was a member of the college's English department, having begun her career as a professor in 1976.

During Showalter's administration, Goshen added several new academic programs of study, including American sign language interpreting; peace, justice and conflict studies; Anabaptist-Mennonite history studies; international studies and special education. The college's ranking in *U.S. News & World Report*'s "America's Best Colleges" rose from the fourth to third tier in the national "liberal arts-bachelor's degree" category and is cited as a "least debt college" for graduating students with less debt.

Besides enrolling a high percentage of international students, Study-Service Term was also recognized by *U.S. News* as an exceptional program. Several new SST host countries came into being since 1997, including Ethiopia, Senegal and Cuba.

Physical legacies of Showalter's nearly eight-year tenure as president include the new music center completed in the fall of 2002, upgrades to residence halls and groundbreaking for an apartment-style student housing facility.

Showalter will become vice president for programs at Fetzer Institute. Fetzer is a private foundation that supports research, education and service programs exploring integral relationships among body, mind and spirit and fostering awareness of the power of love and forgiveness in the global community.—*A joint release from MEA and Goshen College news services*

Showalter

Mission Network enters new partnership

Agreement will give African churches equal voice in program decisions.

Stanley Green, president of Mennonite Mission Network, the mission agency of Mennonite Church USA, was one of seven African and North American church leaders to sign the joint ministry agreement of Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) in Goshen, Ind., June 3.

The agreement creates a new vehicle for mission. In signing the agreement, Green committed Mission Network to work at mission as part of a truly international and inter-Mennonite consortium.

The signing ceremony was a high point in the week of formal and informal meetings of African and North American church and mission leaders. A banquet included an opportunity for AIMM missionary alumni to reconnect with each other and with African church leaders.

The June event ended with a challenge by Siaka Traoré, vice president of the Evangelical Mennonite Church of Burkina Faso, to support the new vision for mission of AIMM and to work together in unity toward the completion of the mission task.

Through the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) of the former General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church USA has a long and rich history of involvement in the work of AIMM.

Green and Steve Wiebe-Johnson, who serves on the interim executive committee of the new AIMM International Central Council, indicated Mennonite Mission Network's commitment to continue involvement in Senegal, Burkina Faso, Congo, Botswana and South Africa and the intention of Mennonite Mission Network to join the partnership councils for those countries.

African churches joining the new venture include the Eglise Evangélique Mennonite du Burkina Faso (Evangelical Mennonite Church of Burkina Faso), the Communauté Mennonite au Congo (Mennonite Church of the Congo), the Communauté Evangélique Mennonite (Evangelical Mennonite Church) of the Congo and the Communauté des Eglises de Frères Mennonites au Congo (Mennonite Brethren Church of the Congo).

Other North American groups in the new consortium are the Evangelical Mennonite Conference in Canada and Mennonite Church Canada Witness.

MBMS International, the mission agency of the Canadian and U.S. Mennonite Brethren conferences, indicated their intention to sign on shortly with specific program interest in Burkina Faso.

The inaugural meeting of the AIMM International Central Council is tentatively scheduled for Burkina Faso this fall, to be followed immediately by initial meetings of the various country-based partnership councils.

In the new arrangement, final decisions concerning program and budget for each partnership council will be made in the country in which the mission activity is to occur rather than in North America. African conferences will be equal partners in these decisions. North American congregations will benefit from a new accessibility to missionaries and African churches.

Size and cost of the AIMM central office will be significantly scaled down. Information about Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission is available online at www.aimmintl.org—*Leona Schrag of AIMM News Service*

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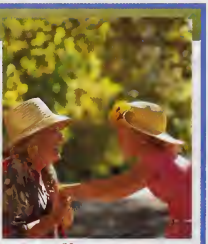

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Vietnamese leader ordained in absentia

Mennonites in London and Philadelphia work to free imprisoned pastor.

The first two Mennonite pastors of the reorganized Vietnam Mennonite Church (VMC) were ordained to Christian ministry on July 18. The unusual ceremony was held at the Vietnamese Mennonite Church in Philadelphia, and one pastor, currently imprisoned in Vietnam, was ordained in absentia.

The Vietnam Mennonite Church selected Nguyen Quang Trung, VMC president, and Nguyen Hong Quang, vice president and general secretary, for ordination. Quang was arrested in June and is being held at an undisclosed location ("Vietnamese Mennonites Wait and Pray," Aug. 3).

To call attention to Quang's imprisonment, London Mennonite Centre members organized a protest—that included a caged man to represent Quang—on July 8 outside the Vietnam Embassy in London (see photo).

Since the Mennonite Church is not yet officially recognized in Vietnam, authorities would not have considered VMC ordinations valid. So the VMC requested that Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference ordain the two men.

L. Keith Weaver, conference moderator, was initially reluctant to ordain a minister in absentia. But he, along with other conference leaders, gave careful attention to this request, to Quang's writings, to the testimony of those who know his character and firm commitment to the Christian faith as well as Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.

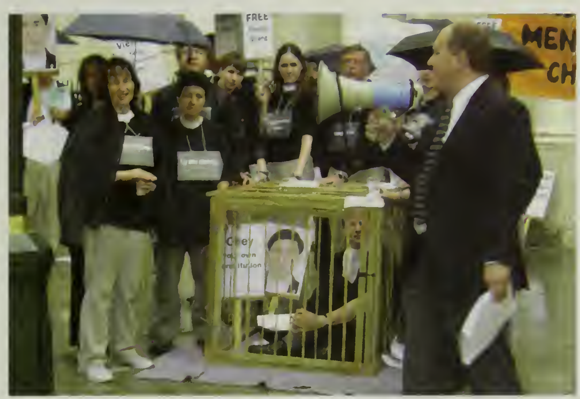
"As I read through the materials," said Carl E. Horning, Lancaster Conference's assistant moderator, "I was struck with similarities between pastor Quang and the Apostle Paul. In an appeal to the authorities of Vietnam to establish equitable laws governing the exercise of religion, he used material from Chairman Ho Chí Minh and Chairman Fidel Castro. Not the kind of authorities we would invoke but reminiscent of Paul in the Areopagus."

Tran Xuan Quang, retiring pastor of the Vietnamese Mennonite Church in Philadelphia with whom Trung worked as pastoral assistant in Vietnam prior to 1975, preached the sermon at the ordination service. Freeman Miller, Lancaster Mennonite Conference's Asia fraternal representative, led the service of ordination for Pastor Trung.

Following Trung's ordination, Miller daubed the oil of anointing on Quang's certificate of ordination. He and other ordained ministers laid their hands on the certificate and prayed a prayer of consecration and commissioning for Quang.

Trung was on a private trip to the eastern United States—a gift from his three children—to visit friends he had learned to know in the 1960s and 1970s. Eastern Mennonite Mission helped facilitate his visit to Pennsylvania and Virginia. Trung spoke in several churches and visited Mennonite institutions in several communities before his departure on July 19.

Trung's visit was an opportune time to fulfill the Vietnam Mennonite Church request for North American Mennonite leaders to conduct an ordination service.—*Vietnamese Ministries and Mennonite World Conference News Service*



Richard Chivers

London Mennonite Centre members protest the imprisonment of Vietnamese Mennonite Nguyen Hong Quang on July 8.

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Brazilians build businesses with $137

Mennonite Central Committee program will be financially independent.

As a loan officer, Hildjane Soares Silva does business in an unlikely place—the poor neighborhood of Janga, on the outskirts of Recife, Brazil's fourth-largest city. Her clients work in low brick houses and corner stores, next to dirt streets where children shoot marbles.

"The job market is very difficult," says Silva, who lives and works in Janga as a microcredit coordinator for FRAME, a small-loan program started by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) seven years ago.

FRAME, which in Portuguese stands for "Rotating Fund of Micro-Entrepreneurs," is helping create jobs by giving some very small businesses the chance to borrow and grow.

Clothing sellers, bakers, hair stylists and shopkeepers in Janga apply for loans from FRAME at less than half the going rate for first-time borrowers. After they pay it off, their credit increases.

"The system itself helps them think about the future because they start with a 400 real loan ($137 U.S.), but think what they can do with 1,200 reals," Silva says.

Saulo Cruz first borrowed from FRAME to buy a hair dryer and other equipment for his hair salon, and he paid it off in eight months. Cruz and his wife, Maria Luiza de Oliveira, are now paying back their second loan for a freezer she uses to sell ice popsicles in her adjoining candy store.

As with most FRAME recipients, the couple's businesses are an extension of their house. Cruz found out about FRAME through his Evangelical Baptist Church, where more than a few of his clients end up.

"In my church there are eight deacons, and four of them were converted right here," he says.

"We have to have a good interaction with the pastors and the church leaders," Silva says.

FRAME became legally separate from MCC in 2002 and is on track to be financially independent in four years.—*MCC News Service*

Matthew Lester

Hildjane Soares Silva, a microcredit coordinator, talks business with Moab Albino de Santana in his corner store in the Janga neighborhood of Recife, Brazil.

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Project generates new peace convictions

'Second Mile' discussions spark vigil in park, preparations for U.S. elections.

Lois Harder discovered that walking the second mile on peace issues with her neighbors in Wichita, Kan., began with taking the first step in her congregation, Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church. Harder, co-pastor at Lorraine Avenue with her husband, Tom, helped launched "People of Faith for Peace," an 18-month project with her congregation and others in her community.

They discussed just peacemaking in light of the U.S.-led invasion in Iraq, organized events such as a peace vigil in a local park and began a peace education process. In the last phase of the project, they are preparing people to make informed decisions about voting in the 2004 elections based on issues of peace and justice.

As part of her participation in the project, Harder taught a Sunday school class at Lorraine Avenue using peace resources including *Second Mile: A Peace Journey for Congregations* (Faith & Life Resources). *Second Mile* helps people explore what it means to follow Jesus' way of peace today. It invites congregations and small groups to enter a journey of worship, study, action and reflection to become active signs of Christ's peace in a broken world.

Second Mile
Pathway A
The Land that
I Will Show You

Lois Harder launched a "Second Mile" peace project in Wichita, Kan.

Laurie L. Oswald

"We have to move as a people from being against war because it is part of our heritage to being against war because it's part of our faith," she says. "It's one thing to say I won't go to war because it would bother my grandfather or grandmother but quite another to say I won't go to war because I want to follow Jesus' way of peace."

Class members shared stories about life experiences that shaped their different perspectives. Her dialogue with adults and youth ranged from a man in his 60s who suffered when others didn't understand why he wanted to go into the Korean War, and a high-school student who wondered if being a police officer carrying a gun is consistent with his Christian convictions.—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

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First in Oklahoma Territory

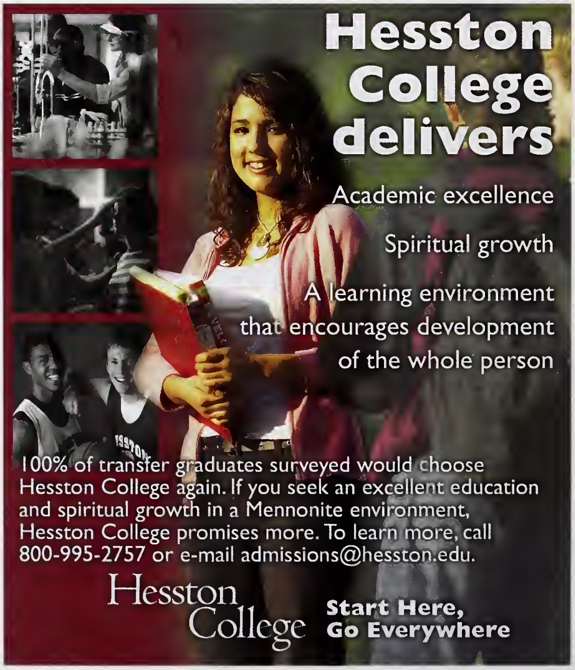
Roger Juhnke, Western District Conference historical committee member, gives a presentation in the former meetinghouse of Mennoville Mennonite Church on July 2. His presentation began the tour that preceded the WDC annual assembly in July.

About 20 tour participants visited sites in the area, beginning with the meetinghouse—built in 1803 as the first church in Oklahoma Territory belonging to the former General Conference Mennonite Church. The Canadian County Historical Museum is restoring the meetinghouse, which was moved from its original location seven miles north of El Reno on Highway 81 to the museum in Heritage Square in downtown El Reno.

While the congregation was never large—31 members at its peak in 1911—regular services were held at Mennoville for 61 years.

Although restoration continues, the church building is now used to interpret early settler life in Oklahoma.—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Laurie L. Oswald



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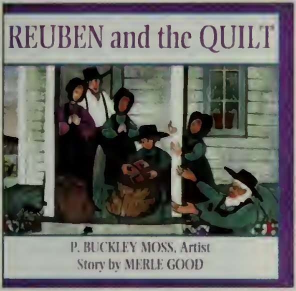

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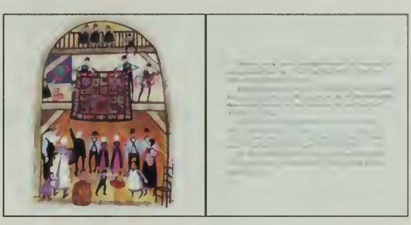

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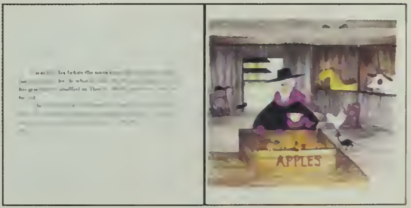

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CALENDAR

50th Anniversary Celebration, Stephens City (Va.) Mennonite Church, Sept. 11, 4-8 p.m. Sept. 12th breakfast at 9:30 a.m. and worship at 10:30 a.m. For more information contact 540-869-5037; email scmc@visuallink.com or check out the Web page client.visuallink.com/~scmc.

WORKERS

Miller, Joseph, ended July 11 as pastor at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Correction: In the July 20 issue of *The Mennonite,* the parents of Twyla Byram Piatote, born June 13, were incorrectly listed. The correct names are Scott Byram and Beth Hege Piatote.

Bauman, Malai North, July 27, to Kendall and Jennifer North Bauman, Harrisonburg, Va.

Bergey, Leisha Renae, May 21, to Lowell and Gloria Knechel Bergey, Kulpsville, Pa.

Cressman, Kristina Marie, July 5, to Mark and Monica Hershberger Cressman, Elmira, Ont.

Gerber, Evelyn Ann, July 12, to Nolan and Lori Boller Gerber, Elkhart, Ind.

Griffin, Casey Glenn, July 22, to John W. and Jill Unruh Griffin III, Hesston, Kan.

Jantz, Daniel Isaac, July 17, to Jason and Kate Epp Jantz, Wichita, Kan.

Keller, Casey Sandra, July 7, to Daniel and Kimberly Roth Keller, Allentown, Pa.

Lewis, Tyler Cale, July 15, to Jason and Kori Franz Lewis, Lincoln, Neb.

Lohrentz, Alexa Kate, July 15, to Greg and Jane Ritter Lohrentz, Frisco, Texas.

Maltsberger, Merrick Eugene and Madelyn Bernice (twins), July 3, to Matt and Tara Friesen Maltsberger, Neodesha, Kan.

Martin, Andrew James, July 9, to Bill and Karen Reinhardt Martin, Elkhart, Ind.

Mendel, Brooklyn Joy, July 15, to Milton and Julie Fuoss Mendel, Freeman, S.D.

Metzler, Isabelle Ava, July 23, to Joel and Andrea Forrey Metzler, Mountville, Pa.

Nofziger, Asher Scott, July 17, to Matt and Amy Rosel Nofziger, Denver, Colo.

Orjala, Rebecca Nadine Graber, June 25, to Jimmy Orjala and Melodie Graber, Downers Grove, Ill.

Paden, Michael Scott, July 13, to Brad Paden and Sue Nafziger, Elkhart, Ind.

Rhodes, Miriam Elizabeth, June 19, to Jason and Laura Lehman Rhodes, Harrisonburg, Va.

Rohrer, Thatcher Charles, July 9, to Tony and Teri Rohrer, Orrville, Ohio.

Steiner, Jackson Wyman, July 20, to Rex and Barbie Kindy Steiner, Wooster, Ohio.

Swartley, Sean David, July 11, to David and Shelby Landis Swartley, Lancaster, Pa.

Tuon, Berecha, July 14, to Sinoun and Navy Sen Tuon, Elizabethtown, Pa.

Weber, John Colin, June 16, to Jeffrey and Stephanie Halliday Weber, Ephrata, Pa.

Zook, Levi Michael, July 27, to Mike and Marcia Zook, Harrisonburg, Va.

MARRIAGES

Burkholder/Coblentz: Lindsay Burkholder, Uniontown, Ohio, and Seth Coblentz, Hartville, Ohio, July 9 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Gascho/Hershberger: Lisa Gascho, West Liberty, Ohio, and Andrew Hershberger, Kalona, Iowa, June 12 at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

Hofstetter/Slater: Karl Hofstetter, Kidron, Ohio, and Sonia Slater, N.D., June 11 at Trinity Free Lutheran Church, N.D.

Hofstetter/Snyder: Jonathan Hofstetter, Kidron, Ohio, and Rebecca Snyder, Smithville, Ohio, June 26 at Smithville Brethren Church.

DEATHS

Alderfer, Edwin S., 82, Goshen, Ind., died May 21. Spouse: Helen Wade Alderfer. Parents: Franklin and Maria Stover Alderfer. Children: Ann Kauffman, Faith, Mary, Amy; four grandchildren. Funeral: May 23 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Arner, Daryl, 52, Orrville, Ohio, died July 18 of cancer. Spouse: Sandra Sutliff Arner. Parents: James and Loretta Krabill Arner. Children: Kenneth, Phil. Funeral: July 22 at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville, Ohio.

Blosser, Dorothy Nice, 72, Harrisonburg, Va., died June 19 of cancer. Spouse: Rev. Glendon L. Blosser. Parents: Henry and Lulu Nice. Children: Floyd, Diane Burkholder, Phil, Myron; 14 grandchildren. Funeral: June 22 at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Bucher, Harold Musselman, 80, Bellefontaine, Ohio, died July 20. Spouse: Florence Yothers Bucher. Parents: B.L. and Mabel Musselman Bucher. Children: Rachel Kauffman, David, Carol Bixler, Dale (deceased); nine grandchildren; one great-grandchild. There will be no funeral.

Carson, Bernice, 67, Markham, Ill., died July 10 of cancer. Spouse: L.A. Carson (deceased). Parents: Zelmar Moore and Virginia Buckingham. Children: Joyce, Leon; two grandchildren. Funeral: July 15 at Community Mennonite Church, Markham.

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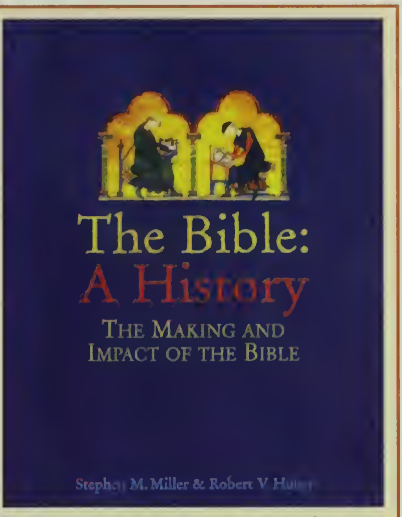
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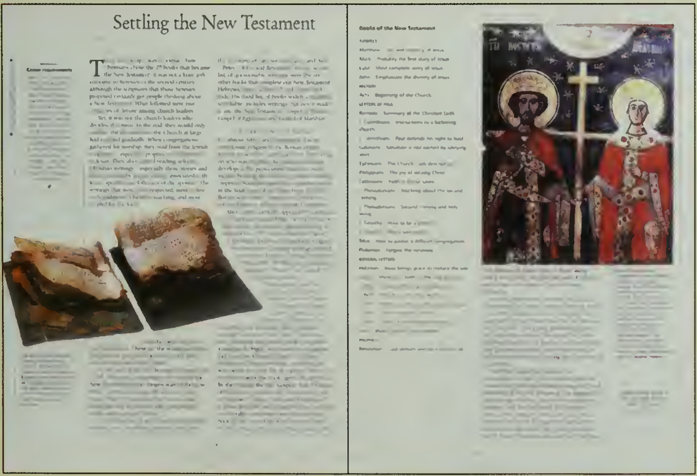
Stephen M. Miller is a full-time freelance writer and editor, specializing in Bible-related projects. He has served as editor for *Illustrated Bible Life* magazine and been a contributing writer for *Who's Who in the Bible, The Bible Through the Ages, The Illustrated Dictionary of Bible Life and Times, The Complete Guide to the Bible,* and *Quest Study Bible.* He is the author of *How to Get Into the Bible* and *How to Get the Bible Into My Life.*

Robert V. Huber is now a freelance writer who worked for more than five years with *Encyclopedia Americana.* He has worked on a wide variety of books, including *Jesus and His Times, Who's Who in the Bible,* and *The Bible Through the Ages,* for which he was the project editor.



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Good Books

Craig, Robert R., 81, Elkhart, Ind., died July 12. Spouse: Martha Craig. Parents: Hiram D. and Sena Craig. Children: Tammie Blevins, Andrea Reich, Mary Froelich, Jim DeKoster; 15 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 16 in Elkhart.

Epp, Louise Susan Goossen, 88, Mountain Lake, Minn., died July 17 of a rare blood disorder. Spouse: Roy A. Epp (deceased). Parents: Peter F. and Maria Schultz Goossen. Children: Loretta Kaufman, Roy G., Darlene Pegues, Diane Harder; 16 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 21 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake.

Helmuth, Vesta F. Hostetler, 93, Monroe, N.C., died July 18 of a stroke. Spouse: Gilbert Helmuth (deceased). Parents: Alvin and Mary Schloneger Hostetler. Children: Dorothy Zook, Dr. Willard; five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 22 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville, Ohio.

Kauffman, Retha Hostetler, 90, Goshen, Ind., died May 26. Spouse: W. Paul Kauffman (deceased). Parents: Charles and Inez Eash Hostetler. Children: Thomas, Ned, Kathy; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 29 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Lewis, Richard A., 80, Kalona, Iowa, died July 20 of natural causes. Spouse: Verla Stocks Lewis. Parents: Roy and Editha Tibbets Lewis. Children: James, Gerald, Aline Schipper, Carol Irving, Rita Gardner; 11 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 23 at Kalona Mennonite Church.

O'Rourke, Aiden Russell, infant, Telford, Pa., died July 24 of premature delivery. Parents: Russell and Michelle Greiser O'Rourke. Funeral: July 30 at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Ratzlaff, Marvin H., 81, Henderson, Neb., died July 5. Spouse: Edna Friesen Ratzlaff (deceased). Parents: Henry J. and Anna Janzen Ratzlaff. Children: Ralph, Philip, Mary Havenridge; six grandchildren. Funeral: July 8 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Riegsecker, Leah Smead, 96, Archbold, Ohio, died July 18. Spouse: Albert Riegsecker (deceased). Parents: Louis and Leah Smead. Children: Norman, Darold, Donnabelle Burkholder, Carol Macey; 11 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 23 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Springer, Nelson P., 88, Goshen, Ind., died June 16. Spouse: Betty Weber Springer. Parents: Ben and Clara Hieser Springer. Children: Ken, Joe, Beth Farrand, Tina; seven grandchildren. Funeral: June 19 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

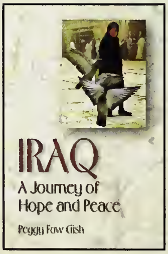
Steckly, Civilla Kauffman, 82, Albany, Ore., died July 16. Spouse: Harold Steckly. Parents: Levi and Nettie Sharp Kauffman. Children: Larry, Bonnie Paul, Mary Steiner, Linda Emmert; four grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 21 at Albany (Ore.) Mennonite Church.

Troyer, Kathryn Hartzler, 93, Goshen, Ind., died June 3. Spouse: M. Raymond Troyer (deceased). Parents: Isaiah and Amanda Fett Hartzler. Children: Betty Hartzler, Janet Yordy, Norman, Jon, Dennis, David; 16 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 6 at Greencroft Meetinghouse, Goshen.

Voth, Elmer, 94, North Newton, Kan., died July 21. Spouse: Linda Ediger Voth (deceased). Parents: Rev. Cornelius H. and Lizzie Sperling Voth. Children: Eugene, Stanley, Elizabeth Friesen; eight grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Memorial service: July 24 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Yoder, Ethel Oyer, 95, Goshen, Ind., died June 20. Spouse: Samuel A. Yoder (deceased). Parents: Edward and Ellen Smith Oyer. Children: Phyllis, Elaine Unzicker; eight grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 23 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Coming in September



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Peggy Gish went to Iraq in an attempt to prevent war. But on March 20, 2003, the bombs began falling on Baghdad. In her book, Gish recounts the moving story of Christian Peacemaker Teams' (CPT) work in Iraq, before, during, and after the 2003 war and occupation. Told as her personal story, Gish makes real the story of prisoner abuse, the character of the Iraqi people, and a passionate vision for peace. From the fall of 2002 to the spring of 2004, Gish chronicles her Iraq experience, including a brief "Postscript." Here are stories of sleeping in a tent during bomb attacks, villages surrounded in razor wire, and being deported out of Iraq.
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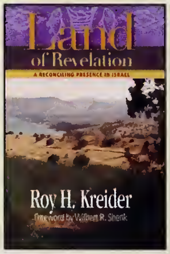
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A RECONCILING PRESENCE IN ISRAEL
Roy H. Kreider
Foreword by Wilbert R. Shenk

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Mennonite Central Committee urgently needs three workers to support the MCC program in Bangladesh through a major transition. A ***service worker coordinator*** is needed for one to three years to provide support for the expatriate service worker team as they adjust to life and work in Bangladesh. Previous overseas experience and a degree in Human Resources, social work, international development or related field required. A ***marketing/public relations officer*** is needed to assist the NGO partner, develop a marketing strategy and determine new products. A degree in business administration or public relations/marketing and three years of related experience are required. Three-year term preferred. A ***business consultant*** who knows the fair trade sector is needed for one year to do in-depth financial analysis and recommend financial restructuring for an MCC organization moving to independence as a local NGO.

For more information about these positions, contact Jan Siemens jds@mcc.org; 717-859-1151 or read the assignment descriptions on our Web site, www.mcc.org/serve.

Clinton Frame Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., a 500+ member church is seeking a ***youth/associate pastor.*** Our junior youth and MYF have an enrollment of 80 plus. Applicants should be on fire for Christ with personal devotional time daily, love for serving and mission, Anabaptist belief, team player, good teacher, prefer a bachelor's degree and possibly some seminary education and experience working with youth. Our desire is to have this position filled by someone who is following God's calling toward youth pastor as a long-term ministry. If your gifts fit our needs, please contact Bob Yoder at IN-MI Mennonite Conference, 800-288-8486, or email bob@im.mennonite.net.

An alternative is what we want to offer to our community. If you are a creative visionary with a love of leading people, **Pleasant View Mennonite** in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, is a match for your gifts as a ***pastor.*** We are a diverse church that embraces experiment and change. We offer you and your family a nurturing environment and small-town living at its best. Come be a part of our church family as well as our Mt. Pleasant community and Central Plains Conference as we strive to make Pleasant View an essential piece of God's kingdom. If you would like to know more about us, email our search committee chair at mleichty@iwc.edu.

Lake Center Christian Schools (K-10) school of 525 students in Hartville, Ohio (Akron/Canton area), is accepting applications for the following position: full-time ***director of development.*** This person will lead the development department in all areas of fund-raising and donor development/relation. For further information, please contact Matt McMullen, Superintendent; phone 330-877-2049; fax 330-877-2040; email lccsprincipal@yahoo.com.

Mennonite Mission Network seeks an experienced ***webmaster*** for the Great Lakes office in Elkhart, Ind. Responsibilities for this full-time position include managing day-to-day Web content, designing Web templates, pages and creating online photo galleries and coordinating Web content with other staff. Skills needed are the ability to organize, prioritize, schedule and complete work assignments. Experience should include at least two years as a Web designer, knowledge of HTML, Macromedia Dreamweaver and Flash and Photoshop. Experience with database-driven Web applications a plus. A bachelor's degree in graphic design, fine arts, e-commerce, communications, journalism, marketing or a related field is desirable. Applications accepted through Aug. 27.

For more information call Human Resources at 866-866-2872, or email a letter of interest and resume to staffrecruitment@mennonitemission.net.

Full-time position available at **Mennonite Financial**'s Ephrata, Pa., branch. Primary responsibilities include business development and consumer and small-business lending. Mennonite Financial is a credit union that serves the Anabaptist community in the United States. Contact Sandy Hershey at 800-451-5719, ext. 172; email sandy@mennonitefinancial.com.

Adriel, a Mennonite children's agency, seeks a full-time ***campus pastor.*** Responsibilities include spiritual guidance for youth and staff, coordination of summer program, and relating to broader church. Bachelor's degree in social services, education or ministry required with seminary degree/degree in youth ministry preferred. Contact Karla Gingerich at 937-465-0010 ext. 137, or kgingerich@adriel.org. EOE.

Mennonite Central Committee U.S.'s Office on Crime and Justice and Mennonite Concilation Service are sponsoring an ***advanced training institute entitled "Working with Groups"*** Oct. 11-15 at the MCC Welcoming Place, Akron, Pa. The cost is $450 ($500 for registrations received after Sept. 17); some scholarship assistance is available. For more information, visit www.mcc.org/us/peaceandjustice/mcs.html or contact MCS at P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501; 717-859-1151; mcs@mccus.org.

Mennonite Village Retirement Community seeks ***foundation director.*** Experience in development and fund-raising preferred. Full benefits. For questions, email carol@mennonitevillage.org. Application available at www.mennonitevillage.org.

Managing editor of **Herald Press.** Mennonite Publishing Network is seeking an editor for its book division. For more information visit www.heraldpress.com. Send letter of application to Herald Press Director, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683 or levi@mph.org. Applications will be reviewed immediately. Position will remain open until filled.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking applicants for the position of **director of admissions** for undergraduate programs. This full-time position requires an individual who can work in a highly-visible, goal-oriented environment. The primary responsibility is to lead the admissions team to achieve university enrollment targets through promotional strategies, staff training and motivation, and interaction with campuswide committees and initiatives. The position reports to the vice president for enrollment and marketing. A bachelor's degree and prior experience in admissions is required. Master's degree preferred. The search committee will begin reviewing applications immediately. Position will remain open until filled.

For more information visit our Web site at www.emu.edu. Send letter of application, resumé and three references to Human Resources Office, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; 540-432-4108 or hr@emu.edu. Persons who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

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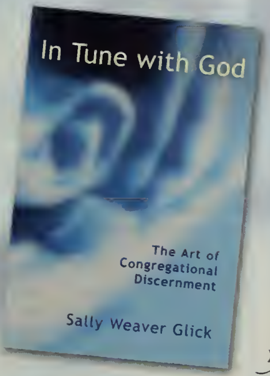

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Be radical, read a book

Gordon Houser

Want to be part of a countercultural minority? Pick up a book and read it. According to a survey released July 8 by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), fewer than half of Americans over 18 now read novels, short stories, plays or poetry. And only 57 percent of U.S. adults read even one book in 2002.

The survey, called "Reading at Risk," is based on data from "The Survey of Public Participation in the Arts," conducted by the Census Bureau in 2002. It compares data from 10 years earlier and shows that the number of nonreading adults increased by more than 17 million, and the reading of literature declined by 7 percent. The study says that the greatest decline in reading was among young people aged 18 to 24.

The study gives us "accurate numbers that support our worst fears about American reading," says NEA chair Dana Gioia, who attributed the decline to the Internet, television and movies. While people may argue that young people surfing the Web are at least reading, such interactive electronic media "foster shorter attention spans and accelerated gratification," according to the NEA.

The survey also says there is a striking correlation between readers of literature and those who are socially engaged, noting that readers are more likely than nonreaders to do volunteer or charity work and go to art museums, performing arts events and ball games. "Of literary readers, 43 percent perform charity work; only 17 percent of nonreaders do," said Gioia.

"If one believes that active and engaged readers lead richer intellectual lives than nonreaders and that a well-read citizenry is essential to a vibrant democracy, the decline of literary reading calls for serious action," the report states.

This easily leads to the question of whether or not the increasingly polarized and strident political debate in this country relates to the decline of reading. Most likely other factors contribute to the dumbing-down of our political discourse.

The point is, reading (and not reading) has consequences. Engaging ideas and taking time to read various points of view, including imaginative literature, broadens one's worldview. It also clearly leads to greater social involvement.

Those who know me know how terribly biased I am about this subject. In addition, my job depends on people reading. An avid reader, I have trouble imagining going through an entire year without reading one book. Yet 43 percent of American adults do this.

For you faithful few who do read, go read a book, then loan one to a friend.

FILMS

Spider-Man 2 (PG-13) is not only the biggest-grossing film of the summer, it's one of the better ones. Director Sam Raimi focuses on the characters of this comic-book tale in ways that speak to most of us (e.g., the power we feel when we know our calling). The film also works well on other levels, from its acting to its use of symbols.

Super Size Me (PG-13) is a documentary by Morgan Spurlock, who endangers his life by eating only food from McDonald's for a month. The film addresses the epidemic of obesity in the United States and provides a wake-up call. Every U.S. school board and school should see it.

Before Sunset (R) is Richard Linklater's follow-up to his *Before Sunrise* (1995), as Jesse and Celine meet in Paris nine years later. Almost the entire movie is their conversation before he must catch a flight back to New York. It feels real and puts us in touch with contemporary individuals' search for some meaning in life.

BOOKS

Soul Brothers: Men in the Bible Speak to Men Today by Richard Rohr (Orbis Books, 2004, $20) is a companion to **Soul Sisters: Women in Scripture Speak to Women Today** by Edwina Gateley (Orbis Books, 2002, $20). Both books include gripping art by Louis Glanzman of 12 women and 12 men. Gateley's poetic meditations speak to the feelings of the characters, while Rohr is more idea oriented. He writes: "It seems God just needs a few willing partners to assist in the redemption of the world. The Great Lover needs only a few conscious lovers to join in a giant yes to life."

What Does It Mean to Be a Man? by Thomas Hart (Paulist Press, 2004, $14.95) is an excellent tool for men to explore their spiritual growth. He writes, "Perhaps if we worked at our own growth as persons and became healthier and more whole, we would see and address the chronic problems of war, hunger, disease and poverty in a quite different way." Indeed.

'Amish in the City' premieres

Despite protests from many Mennonites and even from 51 members of Congress, UPN premiered its new reality-TV series, "Amish in the City," on July 28. The show brings together five Amish young people and six urban 20-somethings, and they live together in a house in the Hollywood Hills.

I'm among the minority who avoid reality TV, which seems to be taking over the airwaves. I remain puzzled by their appeal. Craig Detweiler and Barry Taylor, authors of *A Matrix of Meanings: Finding God in Pop Culture*, say this interest reflects people's search for authenticity, but I'm not so sure. It seems superficial.

The show's producers want to show a clash of cultures, but it's really one-sided. The Amish are the freaks who ooh and aah at the big city and the beach. And while the others have to dress in Amish clothes one day, they are not exposed to real Amish life. And neither is the audience.

In one poignant moment an Amish man nearly drowns in the ocean and prays, afraid he'll go to hell before joining the Amish church. The weirdest person on the show, it turns out, is not one of the Amish but Ariel, who calls eggs "chicken abortions" and thinks cows come from outer space.

Perhaps the saddest moment is when the group helps the Amish buy new clothes, and one Amish man says he now feels better about himself. That should please our commercial culture.—*Gordon Houser*

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Everett J. Thomas

Unretired disciples

Mennonite retirement communities are a growing reality across the United States. With a wave of Baby Boomers beginning to plan for retirement (see page 13), this phenomenon will be in growth mode for years to come.

But moving into a Mennonite retirement community need not mean a retreat from the world. Just as coals piled together generate more warmth than those scattered about, a concentration of Mennonite residents on one campus can make such places centers of missional activity.

Mennonites know how to build community. This gift is especially obvious in cities and towns where Mennonite retirement centers flourish. The six institutions surveyed by Melanie Zuercher (see page 8) demonstrate that when Mennonites create these communities they make visible our best impulses to take care of each other. For example, what better expression of mutual aid than "one committed group of residents who have been helping feed other residents two meals a day, day in and day out, for years" (see page 11)?

Furthermore, retirement communities do more than take care of those who can afford the care. Glencroft, in Phoenix, is "trying to reach a lower and lower-middle-class clientele, to serve the broad needs of the community" says CEO Jay Shetler. This is an important missional activity and one to be blessed by the church. Health-care access is, as he says, "a peace and social justice issue." (Health-care access will be the focus of a special issue of *The Mennonite* next year.)

Moving into a Mennonite retirement community need not mean a retreat from the world.

Beyond the corporate activity of an institution, individual residents can contribute to the missional effort of the church. Although retirement community residents may experience diminishment of energy and mobility, many carry a lifetime of experience as faithful Christians.

Opportunities, then, continue for witnessing to other residents who may not be Christian. Residents of retirement communities are often confronted by crises related to their health, family dynamics and diminishing abilities. What better time to be a witness to the saving help that God offers through the presence of his Spirit.

Another form of witnessing is through volunteering. All the retirement centers surveyed have a strong volunteer culture (see page 9). Especially for those whose life trajectories did not allow for a stint of voluntary service earlier, this can be a wonderful way to be a wise steward of discretionary time now available.

However, there are missional opportunities beyond volunteering or sharing each other's burdens. Mennonites in retirement communities can also witness to the world outside the campus. This awareness is usually missing from Mennonite retirement communities.

Most civic leaders will acknowledge that a retirement center is an important economic asset for their town or city. The combined payroll of the staff has a positive ripple effect within the local economy. The residents' buying power is significant when they shop in nearby stores.

Such concentrated economic power offers a Mennonite retirement community important influence within its town or city. I should know. For 12 years I have been a member of the Goshen, Ind., city council, and the district I represent includes Greencroft—Indiana's largest not-for-profit retirement center with more than 1,200 residents.

I experience firsthand the power of such a concentration of Mennonites whenever I work at public policy issues as a member of the council. Whether our city is working at quality-of-life issues (like building bike paths around town) or social issues (like the formation of a commission to work at race relations), many in this cloud of witnesses quietly lend me their support and offer encouragement. They also vote for the folks who represent their values in local elections.

Mennonite retirement communities can represent the Mennonite faith to non-Mennonite neighbors, whether on-campus or across town. Like the rest of the church, these institutions and their residents are called to contribute to the mission of the church. After all, there is no verse in the Bible describing retirement for a disciple.—*ejt*

The next issue of *The Mennonite* will be dated Sept. 7, 2004.

The Mennonite

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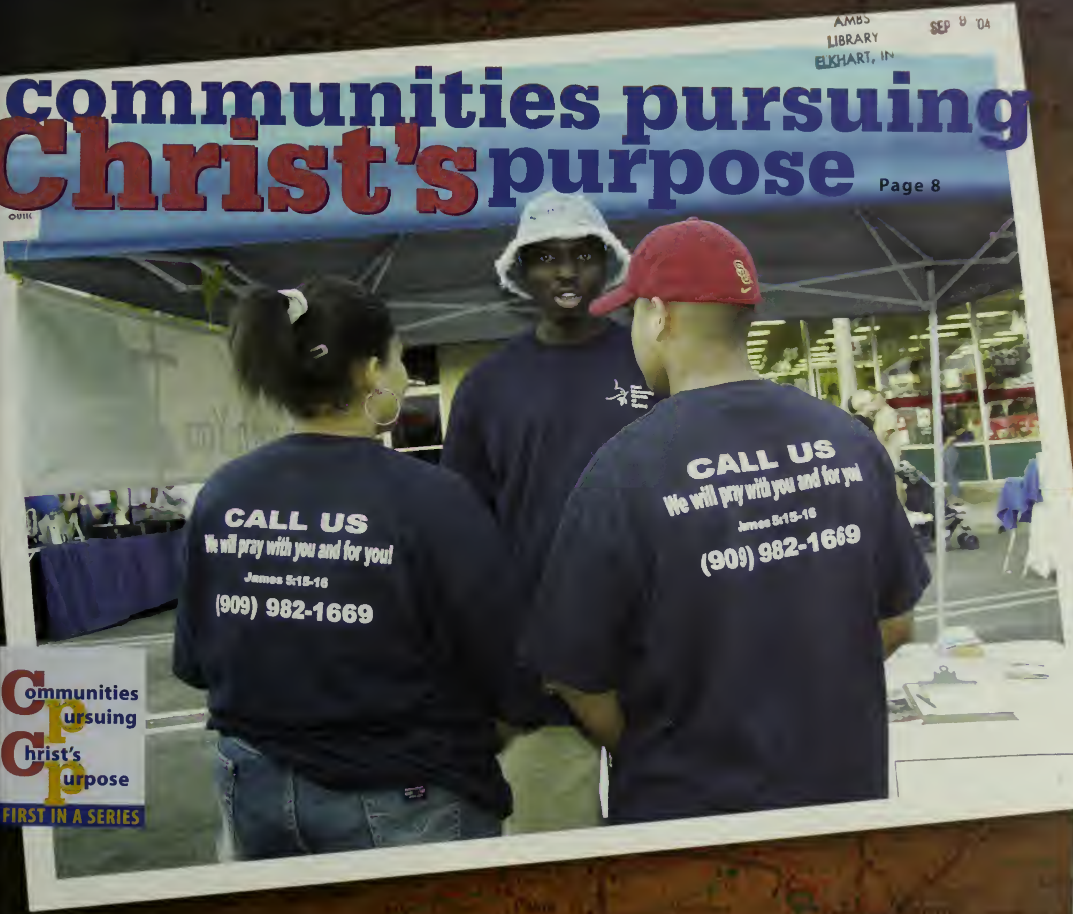
communities pursuing Christ's purpose

Page 8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God is bigger than our language about God

Ron W. Adams is pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

Or suppose a woman has 10 valuable silver coins and loses one. Won't she light a lamp and look in every corner of the house and sweep every nook and cranny until she finds it? And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors to rejoice with her because she has found her lost coin. In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents.—Luke 15:8-10 (NLT)

I use inclusive language when I preach. It's not hard to do. Start by substituting "humanity" for "mankind." It gets easier from there. This is not praiseworthy but an attempt to leave room in the sermon for everyone to enter. I teach my sons that we watch our language in the realm of God.

I rarely use masculine language for God. I don't rewrite the Scriptures. But when the words are my own, they reflect a God who is more than male. This is true to the variety of images of God we find in Scripture.

The biblical writers use masculine language when speaking of God. As are we, those writers were products of their times and cultures. Their choice of language is not surprising. They used language, metaphor and imagery that made sense to their audiences. Patriarchal societies understood and preferred masculine language.

But the writers also compared God to a nursing mother (Isaiah 49:15) and an eagle who bore Israel up on her wings (Exodus 19:4). Though these feminine images of God are scarcer than I'd prefer, they tell us our understanding of God should not be limited by our cultural or linguistic preferences. Using feminine language to describe God even once makes clear that God is not solely masculine.

Jesus called God Father. He instructed the disciples to pray to "our Father." I have no need to clean up Jesus to fit my taste or my understanding of justice. I do not hesitate to pray the Lord's prayer as recorded in the Gospels.

But Jesus also described God as a woman who lost a coin. Again I hear that caution against settling on only one image of God, even one recommended by Jesus. God is bigger than any single image presented in the Scripture.

Provider, Savior, Redeemer, King, Lord, Warrior, Mother, Father, Eagle, Rock, Fire, Light, Wind, Spirit, Son. The Scripture is full of different images of God. As we hold them together we discern the outline of One far beyond anything or anyone we can imagine. Singly these images may be easier to hold, they may create a sharper picture. But it is in the aggregate that we discern the complexity, the wonder, the beyond-ness of the God of Scripture. Avoiding exclusive language for God invites us to be open to a multitude of biblical lenses through which to understand and appreciate who God is.

Using inclusive language is also a matter of justice. Christians have been slow to recognize that the Bible's masculine bias is as culturally bound as its poetry or cosmology. We dismiss calls for inclusivity as "political correctness," yet Jesus warned against hindering anyone from becoming a disciple. If exclusive language hinders anyone from following Jesus, we'd do well to heed that warning.

For too long some of our sisters have been excluded from feeling fully welcome. The fault is not God's, the One who created us in the divine image, female and male, and called us good. The fault is the use of language that excludes and limits the good news in a way that makes it hard to hear.

If only one young woman finds a deeper connection to God through inclusive language, that's worth throwing a party. If my sons come to see that God is One who values and understands every human being, that's worth throwing a party. And even if the only one changed is the preacher, I say, Break out the balloons and serve the ice cream. There is joy in heaven (and earth) when even one sinner repents. TM

TheMennonite

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

Amish in the City

Re the reality TV show "Amish in the City" (Mediaculture, Aug. 17): Does "Amish in the City" exploit Amish? Sure it does. But it pales in comparison to other ways the presence of Amish is used to promote tourism in Elkhart and LaGrange counties in Indiana, Holmes County in Ohio, Lancaster County in Pa., and other counties as well. Businesses want to profit from tourist dollars as the tourists gawk at Amish in their quaint dress, watch them travel in a horse-drawn buggy or wagon—all the while staying in the comfort of an elegant motel as they observe the simple lifestyle.

If we want to protest Amish exploitation, why don't we protest every time we see the name "Amish" used to promote the sale of a product? *—Richard Hostetler, Goshen, Ind.*

No pledge of allegiance

Thank you for J. Nelson Kraybill's challenging call questioning participation in the national pledge of allegiance ("A Christian Pledge of Allegiance," Aug. 3). My parents suggested that it was not appropriate for Christians. Through 12 years of public school I stood at attention during the pledge with arms down at my side. Christ and Caesar both call for our ultimate loyalties, and we make the choice. After a half century of refusing the pledge (when my peers stand to declare their loyalty to Old Glory), I am reminded of both who and whose I am.*—Bob Hartzler, Wayland, Iowa*

Bless large congregations

Thanks to Jim Lapp for speaking out in the article "Let's Bless Large Mennonite Congregations" (Aug. 3). As a church planter who has had the incredible privilege of leading a small group of six to become a large growing congregation, I too have felt I have to be careful about what I say and where I say it. Some in the Mennonite church imply we must be doing something wrong or un-Anabaptist to become a church that continues to attract large numbers of people from our community. Furthermore, I occasionally feel judged for not attending leadership seminars at our Mennonite seminaries. Instead I attend other seminars across the country at large churches that have already walked where we will be walking or take classes from other seminary professors who have had experience leading large, growing churches.

I pray there will be a day when larger Mennonite congregations will not be seen as an aberration of the "ideal" small or medium-sized church. My prayer is that regardless of the size of any church, there will be rejoicing together that we are effectively reaching our communities with the good news, and more people are becoming fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.*—Dennis Gingerich, Cape Coral, Fla.*

IN THIS ISSUE

We have heard that Mennonite Church USA is to be a missonal church. But what does that look like? In this issue we begin a series by Laurie L. Oswald intended to describe what it means to be a missional church (page 8). Oswald says, "Asking what God is doing in the world and then becoming people who can join God is more a shift in focus than adding programs." Other expressions of the missional church are the biennial gatherings sponsored by Mennonite racial-ethnic associate groups (beginning on page 21). Finally, we note that Christian Peacemaker Teams recently celebrated 20 years of standing peacefully between warring parties and that founding director Gene Stoltzfus recently retired. We commissioned Melanie Zuercher to review this phenomenal expression of the missional church and reflect on what its success is saying about our historic peace witness (page 11).*—Editor*

Silly of church to divide

Several articles in the July 20 issue tell of the serious adjustments being made in at least some of the area conferences, and especially Western District, of Mennonite Church USA. I understood the articles to say that a whole range of previous associations and history now seem to be treated with neglect, and many churches and their members in states like Kansas and Oklahoma are baffled as to why the changes were made at all. These system changes are now combined with demographic and economic shifts to produce major challenges.

I share the feelings of those who are telling us what seems to be happening. From where I sit, it seemed almost silly to divide all kinds of activities into two national groupings simply to say that we had a distinct church on each side of the border. If national characteristics play such a large role in religious bodies, one wonders about priorities. Canada and the United States are distinct countries, but the Christian church is no more a divided entity by political borders now than it was in the time of the apostle Paul.

At St. Louis 1999 a friend, more outspoken than I am, opined, "We are here at the death of the General Conference." May there be enough grace to help us go on from here and grasp the opportunities as new light, hopefully, comes.*—Lorne Buhr, Edmonton*

Seeds for a missional church

Thank you Dorothy Nickel Friesen for the observations on the state of rural communities and rural churches ("Secondary Terrorism," July 20). I was reminded that the power of death is real and it is wanting to claim our towns and our churches. I hope the article is only the beginning of a process whereby we reflect on what is happening around us in light of Christ's victory over the powers of this age and then creatively imagine how the Christian community can be engaged in witnessing to the presence of the kingdom that is making the world new.

What we are witnessing in the rural areas is not "terrorism." We are instead experiencing the inevitable consequences of modernization in which the poor are exploited while those profit who control seeds and markets. In order to renew the world, churches both urban and rural need to rethink what it means to share in the fellowship of the Lord's Table. Eating at one and the same time connects us with social, political economic, environmental issues. By awakening our conscience and through the renewal of the meaning of our sacraments we can turn this tragedy into an opportunity to praise God.—*Ray Epp, Yubarigun, Japan*

God is not Republican or Democrat

I read *The Mennonite* with interest each week, especially the letters from readers. Two letters especially caught my eye in the Aug. 17 Readers Say: "Vote for Good Government" by Wayne Kratzer and "Other Wars Than Iraq" by Lorene Gable.

I am saddened by these letters. I am saddened that these two individuals consider liberals the enemy. I am not the enemy. I believe in peace, justice and social reform. I believe in not only tolerance but acceptance and understanding of all people, just as Jesus taught. I disagree with Gable on most of her points, but this does not make me less committed to Christian or Mennonite values than she. Were our forebears not liberals of a sort, bucking the norm of the Catholic church to start something new? Are we not, as a faith, supposed to be committed to helping the poor and restoring social justice, both decidedly Democratic ideals? Are we not also supposed to be committed to peacemaking, something our current president has most definitely left by the wayside?

God is not a Republican. Neither is God a Democrat. And neither you nor the Religious Right speak for me.—*Renita Leichty, Henderson, Ky.*

Listen to a poor person

In response to the letters "Vote for Good Government" and "Other Wars Than Iraq" (Readers Say, Aug. 17): The political atmosphere is volatile; politicians are baiting and hooking the Christian voting block with hot-button issues such as abortion and so-called "gay marriage" in an attempt to divert our attention from the war in Iraq, the "situation" in Sudan, international relations in general, increased poverty, the continuing unchecked violence against women and ongoing racism.

Still planning on voting on the issues of "gay marriage" and abortion alone? First, spend five minutes just listening to a poor and single woman considering abortion. Visit with a woman whose husband beat her the night before in front of their children. Hang out in a low-income housing area. Read the testimony of a woman raped in Sudan in an attempt to wipe her race out of existence. Remember, behind every issue there are human faces.—*Jennifer A. Yoder, Columbus, Ohio*

No campaign letters

In the Aug. 17 Readers Say, two letters proposed that we vote in November and vote for President Bush. *The Mennonite* should call a moratorium on all campaign letter writing.

One of the basic tenets of Anabaptism is the separation of church and state. Why would we allow a church publication to promote candidates? Our allegiance is to the kingdom of God. Our national allegiance is secondary. Would our promotion of and voting for certain candidates not make us in part culpable of their grievous violations of God's kingdom? Both candidates are dripping with the unnecessary blood of war (Iraq and Vietnam). They are both beholden to the power structures of the mighty. Deception and lies seem to be the order of the current campaign. We should continue to use our publication to call our government to govern with justice for all. But let us refrain from becoming partisan and actually making the mistake of believing our government can do the work of the kingdom.—*Joseph Yoder, Middlebury, Ind.*

Editor's note: As the U.S. presidential election draws near, we will print letters about the election if space allows. However, priority will be given to letters that address articles and news in The Mennonite.

Life is too short

I want to affirm Clarence Rempel for his words of wisdom ("Life Is Too Short to Pretend," Aug. 17). Life *is* too short to not truly communicate our inner selves with our Christian brothers and sisters. We heal our own wounds from sharing each other's pains and hurts. We grow and learn from each other's guilt and past mistakes. We need to help lift each other up and walk through those difficult times *together*. We can't do so, however, if we don't know about each other's inner churnings.

I'm sure Christ would want us to walk toward each other, not away, in times of pain. Together let's try to drop our pride and our fears and share ourselves in a deeper way with each other.—*Sandy Eberly Wenger, Bellefontaine, Ohio*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Should Christians say the Pledge of Allegiance?

○ Yes (51%)
○ No (42%)
○ Not sure (7%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

IN BRIEF

Shands Stoltzfus named AMBS director of admissions, financial aid

Regina Shands Stoltzfus has been named director of admissions and financial aid for Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., beginning Sept. 7. Stoltzfus has been associate campus pastor for Goshen (Ind.) College and minister of urban ministries for Mennonite Mission Network, Elkhart. Earlier she was associate pastor of Lee Heights Community Church, Cleveland, and coordinator of the Damascus Road anti-racism program. *—AMBS News Service*

Rosedale mission director dies

Henry Helmuth, Latin American mission director for Rosedale Mennonite Missions, died Aug. 1 following a protracted battle with cancer. RMM, headquartered in Rosedale, Ohio, is the mission agency of Conservative Mennonite Conference*—Rosedale Mennonite Missions*

Pasadena Mennonite protests Halliburton

PASADENA, Calif.—Pasadena Mennonite Church organized a protest and vigil held Aug. 7 in front of the Pasadena offices of Halliburton. About 35 local evangelical Christians participated in the protest.

According to organizers, the group wanted to show that the values espoused by the Bush administration are opposed to Christian values that many evangelicals hold dear. The group sought to challenge Christians of all persuasions to apply the life and teachings of Jesus to U.S. foreign policy, and particularly to military and corporate conduct during the occupation of Iraq.

"There are a lot of people who say they are Christians yet are actively supporting violence and corporate profiteering in a way that contradicts Jesus' life and teachings," said organizer Eric Getty, a staff member with InterVarsity, an evangelical campus movement. "The Scriptures clearly challenge these practices, and we are here to witness to a biblical way of love and justice that has always been a part of evangelical tradition."

Bert Newton and Jennifer Davis-Sensenig, pastors at Pasadena Mennonite Church, vow to carry on an active peace witness in the Pasadena area over the coming year.—*Eric Getty*

Dancing before the Lord

At the closing rally of the Holy Spirit in Missions Conference in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, the White Dove children's group, representing various churches in the Sula District of the Honduran Mennonite Church, performed special musical numbers and dances in praise of missions and in honor of missionaries.

Mennonite colleges ranked by magazine

Once again Mennonite colleges have received positive rankings in *U.S. News and World Report*'s annual ranking of colleges and universities.

Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., is one of only three Kansas colleges to make the top half of the 2005 Best Comprehensive Colleges-Midwest list, appearing the highest at no. 28.

Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., has moved up in the rankings, now in the third tier in the national liberal arts category. It was listed in the fourth tier last year.

Bluffton (Ohio) University is ranked in the top tier of comprehensive colleges in the Midwest. It is ranked no. 25 out of 108 ranked schools in the 12-state region.

Goshen (Ind.) College placed solidly in the third tier of the best liberal arts colleges category for the fourth straight year.

The rankings appear in the issue of *U.S. News and World Report* that hit newsstands Aug. 23 and are also available at www.usnews.com.*—from reports by Bethel College, Bluffton University, Eastern Mennonite University and Goshen College News Services*

Susan Miller Balzer

African 'peace meals' in Hesston, Kan.

Sandi Richard (right) pours water over her husband Phil's hands, demonstrating African hospitality before a "peace meal" typical of a wedding feast in Botswana. About 70 Hesston (Kan.) Mennonite Church members and several Hesston College international students ate together in eight homes Aug. 14 and 22. The peace and justice committee of the church planned the meals to encourage Christian fellowship, cross-cultural understanding, praying for peace and giving to the Mennonite Church USA's Peace and Justice Support Network. Guests donated nearly $1,000 to the peace network. That will be doubled by a matching grant from MMA.—*Susan Miller Balzer*

AMBS alumni giving, contributions increase

ELKHART, Ind.—Giving to Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary by alumni increased by nearly two-thirds during the 2003-2004 fiscal year while the number of alumni who gave increased by half. This increase, combined with strong response to AMBS's Next Generation campaign, resulted in a 45 percent jump in total giving to AMBS.

More than 700 AMBS alumni contributed during the year, compared with 475 the previous year, in part because of a phonathon conducted in the fall and spring. Gifts from alumni added up to $267,517, a 64 percent increase over the previous year.

Total giving to AMBS for the year came to $3,353,007. This marked a 45 percent increase over last year and came as a result of contributions to designated projects in the Next Generation Fund for Church Leadership. As of June 30, the Next Generation Fund had reached three-fourths of the goal of $20 million.—*AMBS News Service*

Mennonite Mission Network photo by David Fisher Fast

od's Word is precious'

e Garber Kompaoré is completing a master's degree at ociated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., during a month North America assignment with Mennonite Mission work. She has done Bible translation work in Burkina Faso ce 1982. A foundational truth underlying her ministry, ether in North America or West Africa, is that "God's Word is cious."

Ken Lind

C West Coast bike tour raises $18,000 (plus $5)

ring the sixth MCC West Coast Bike Tour Aug. 2-6, partici- nts pedal off the ferry for a day of riding on Shaw Island. out 60 riders, plus support volunteers, pitched tents at the rgrounds on San Juan Island, taking ferries to explore three ditional islands in Washington's Puget Sound (Orcas, Lopez d Shaw). The tour raised more than $18,000 for the ministry Mennonite Central Committee—or $18,005. One day, rider nes Larimer, Fort Wayne, Ind., told a stranger on the road that s trip was created to benefit needy people around the world. e stranger handed him a $5 bill.—*Cathleen Hockman-Wert*

Olympic champion has Mennonite connection

Joanna Hayes, who won the 100-meter hurdles in record time at this year's Olympics in Athens, Greece, is the granddaughter of Elta Miller, whose second marriage later in life was to Orie Miller, the well-known churchman who helped start Mennonite Central Committee.

Hayes' father, Ted Hayes, is an advocate for the homeless in Los Angeles. In TV interviews, Joanna has testified to her faith.—*from a report by Kent Davis Sensenig, Joanna's Mennonite cousin*

Elfrieda Klassen Dyck dies at 87

Elfrieda Klassen Dyck, 87, long-time Mennonite Central Committee worker and one of the 20 most influential Mennonite men and women of the past century, according to *The Mennonite*, died Aug. 20 in Scottdale, Pa. The family has requested that donations be made to a memorial fund to help refugees that has been established in Elfrieda's name through MCC.

Elfrieda Klassen Dyck

Along with Peter, her husband, Elfrieda served with MCC during and after World War II, when refugees flooded out of war-torn Europe. As recently as 10 years ago, at the time of MCC's 75th anniversary, she and Peter set out on speaking tour across the United States and Canada to talk about their experience.

Elfrieda was born in Donskaja, new Samara, Russia, in 1917, the youngest of 14 children. In 1925, her family fled Russia and settled in Winnipeg, where as a young woman she graduated from St. Boniface Hospital in 1939 as a registered nurse.—*MCC News Service*

Puerto Rico reunion draws 270 to Goshen

GOSHEN, Ind.—More than 270 people from 15 states, Canada and Puerto Rico attended a reunion Aug. 7-8 at Pleasant View Mennonite Church in Goshen. Among those attending were missionaries, voluntary service and Civilian Public Service workers, native Puerto Ricans, Ulrich Foundation staff members and their families.

These had served in Puerto Rico as pastors, teachers, medical service providers, agriculture and community development workers and in other roles to help start churches and improve the living conditions of the local people, starting in the 1940s.

Participants took an offering to help with the work of Academia Menonita Betainia (Bethany Mennonite Academy) in Aibonito.

IN BRIEF

Goshen appoints interim president

Goshen (Ind.) College Board of Directors chair Virgil Miller announced Aug. 19 that John D. Yordy has accepted the invitation to serve as Goshen College's interim president. Yordy has served as provost for Goshen since 1996. He oversaw and coordinated the offices of the academic dean and dean of students and supervised the college budget offices and information technology and managed strategic planning processes. As provost he also served as chief executive officer in the absence of the president. Outgoing president Shirley H. Showalter will officially end her term by Sept. 30.—*Goshen College news service*

SUV fatality rate continues to rise

The gap in safety between sport utility vehicles and passenger cars last year was the widest yet recorded, according to new federal traffic data. People driving or riding in an SUV in 2003 were nearly 11 percent more likely to die in an accident than people in cars, the figures show. The government began keeping detailed statistics on the safety of vehicle categories in 1994. SUVs continue to gain in popularity, despite safety concerns and the vehicles' lagging fuel economy at a time when gasoline prices are high.—*New York Times*

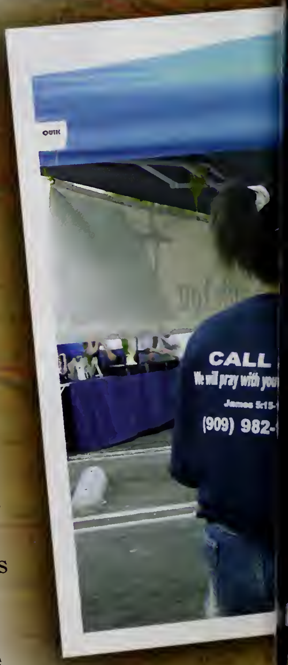
Communities
pursuing
Christ's
purpose
FIRST IN A SERIES

Communities pursuing Christ's purpose

God's heartbeat sends Mennonite Church USA to reach people with healing and hope.

by Laurie L. Oswald

Across Mennonite Church USA, congregations and area conferences are asking anew what it means to join God's work in the world. The answers vary, but the heartbeat is the same: God sends us beyond our church walls and historical roots to reach new people with the healing and hope of Jesus Christ.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Denominational leaders witness to this fresh search to find God's path for Mennonites in the 21st century. And the word "sent" appears often in their testimonies. This sending means that all parts of the denomination will integrate being and doing—living in God's heart so that the church can follow where God's heartbeat sends it.

> **This new focus is causing me to help my congregation export the good news of Jesus Christ and his healing and hope into our communities, and that can be messy sometimes.**—Jane Roeschley

Asking what God is doing in the world and then becoming people who can join God is more a shift in focus than adding more programs, say members of Mennonite Church USA's churchwide missional church team. The team, begun in 2002, is helping the denomination fulfill its missional priorities. The team isn't prescribing a longer "to do" list but is encouraging the church to prayerfully consider God's agenda.

Focus shift, not program addition: Area conference leaders and pastors who are members of the missional church team said this shift of focus is changing people more than programs. Jane Roeschley, associate pastor of Mennonite

Church of Normal (Ill.), says that this shift is helping her congregation risk more messy experiments and worry less about perfect outcomes.

"This new focus is causing me to help my congregation export the good news of Jesus Christ and his healing and hope into our communities, and that can be messy sometimes," she says. "It's just plain hard to move from a 'country club' mentality into a meaningful and connecting ministry context.

"My job as a leader is to tend the messiness and disappointments and false starts. We often begin new outreaches with great ideals, but then discover that unforeseen challenges require that we change and grow in order to make something work.

"God doesn't call us to the American model of success that says we must get it 'right' the first time. Instead, we are called to be faithful and to build relationships. That can mean that we try and try again until our ministry style better connects with those we serve."

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For example, she cites how three Caucasian men from the congregation volunteered to coach African-American boys in a basketball program. "The cultural shifts were a challenge and there were some hard knocks," she says. "One of the coaches said he'd never do that again, but then he ran into two of the kids one day. He was overwhelmed with 'high fives' from one boy, and the other boy introduced him to his mother.

"We learned that sometimes just showing up ... is enough to make an impression. We're realizing that it's okay to ask help from others in the community. Next time, we hope to invite an African-American man from another church to partner with us in these efforts."

Passion, not programs: Along with promoting flexibility and humility in congregations, pastors must also affirm existing passion for ministry and not micromanage programs or push personal agenda, says Beryl Jantzi, senior pastor of Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church.

"In my role, I am not called to do everything but to support others in what they feel God is calling them to do and to be," Beryl says. "That means helping people tap into the fire in their bellies. We need to tap into the energy and excitement that our people already have about areas of ministry."

We need to tap into the energy and excitement that our people already have about areas of ministry.—Beryl Jantzi

For example, because members of the congregation have a passion for being more welcoming, the church hosts an end-of-the-summer neighborhood block party with food, games and entertainment. Some churches work at ministry to children through preschool and day-care programs, he says. But this event targets entire families hoping to make a connection and build lasting relationships.

"People will connect with us when we connect with them," Beryl says. "That means that we must break through our sense of being the quiet in the land and strive to be better neighbors who speak in ways that people can hear our love. ... If we care about their needs for having a place to gather as a neighborhood, then they are going to be more likely to come back for some of our Sunday morning programming."

Prayer shapes passions: Prayer and spending time in God's presence help people prepare to join God's work and agenda, Jantzi and Roeschley says.

"This congregation has taught me the importance of prayer in reaching out," Beryl says. "The passion for being a welcoming place is rooted in prayer and spiritual disciplines." For example, the

Continued on page 10

We're asking what God is doing in the world and then asking who we need to become.—Jim Schrag

Continued from page 9

congregation held a 28-day prayer and fasting event to become more attuned to God's will for the congregation. "We have a prayer committee that helps to keep us praying on a 24-7 basis," he says. "This is so important for supplying the vision and strength to try new ministries."

Jane agrees: "Shifting into this new focus on joining God's mission is not only about doing or only about being, but it's about both—a both/and thing," she says.

"If all you do is go out and try new things all the time without anchoring them in spiritual practices, your congregation will burn out. God uses both the inward and the outward in shaping us as a missional people. We are formed by the practices of worship, Bible study and retreats.

"Then, from out of the depths of prayer, we reach out. And in reaching out, we are also changed and shaped by God. Both the inward and outward help us to become more like Christ and to be more a part of God's mission."

Equipping, not maintaining: Area conference ministers as well as pastors see how a shift in focus is changing people's attitudes, their expectations of leaders and the way they worship, says Jim Lapp, missional church team member and leader of Franconia Mennonite Conference's ministry team.

"This shift means that we will evaluate our pastors not on whether they are maintaining the congregation but whether they are moving the congregation beyond itself, developing new leaders and equipping people for ministry," he says.

A passion for welcoming: From left, Dusty Rhodes, senior pastor Beryl Jantzi and Darlene Landes, members of Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church, enjoy a Wednesday evening fellowship meal at the church.

"It also means that we will ask new questions about our worship styles, including: Can new people understand the language we are using? Do we act as one big, happy family reunion and exclude newcomers?"

Jim is also concerned that area conferences and congregations find evangelism tools that fit Anabaptist theology, including a focus on discipleship to Jesus and community. "I tremble a little when I look around at all the possible models for evangelism and realize that some of them may not be best for us as Anabaptists," he says. "Maybe we start there. But let's not give up on creating or finding resources that grow out of who we are."

No matter what method is used, Jane believes congregations are already equipped to allow God's healing and hope to flow through them to their communities. In *Deeply Woven Roots*, a book she's studied by author Gary Gunderson, she's learned that the local congregation is one of the main tools God has for building "shalom"—peace and wholeness—in communities.

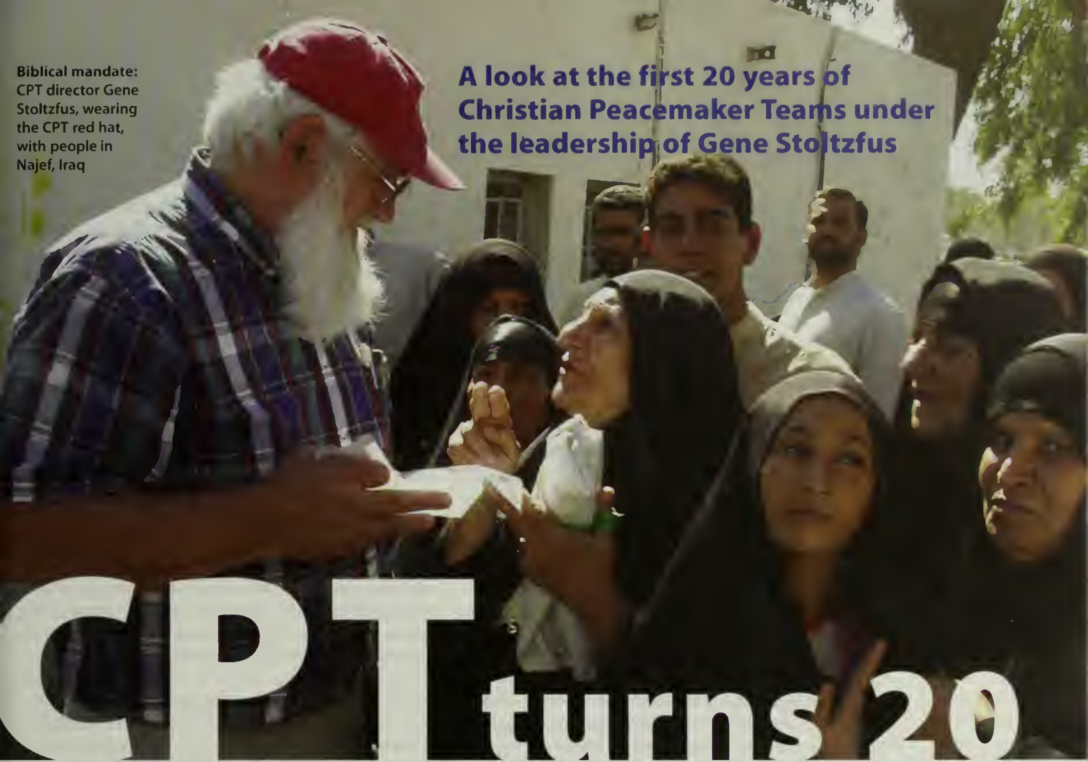
"The congregation lies at the permeable boundary between God's kingdom and the world, and because of that there is a lot of osmosis that can happen," she says. "God has already provided congregations with resources to offer the world, and it is just a matter of scales dropping from our eyes so we can see what those are."

Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, and Stanley Green, executive director of Mennonite Mission Network—the denomination's mission agency—believe scales are dropping from the eyes of Mennonites as they respond to who they are as God's sent people. The two leaders are co-chairs of the missional church team.

"In decades past, we asked who God was and then asked what God wanted us to do," Jim Schrag says. "But with this shift in focus, we're turning that around. We're asking what God is doing in the world and then asking who we need to become. This is not just another new methodology. It is a renewal movement, and it has a lot of potential for transforming our self-understanding."

Stanley says, "I'm excited that in the 21st century in Mennonite Church USA, we're recovering our identity and are being revitalized to be missional people who engage our world with the good news of Jesus Christ, both at home and around the world."

Laurie L. Oswald is news service director for Mennonite Church USA.



Biblical mandate: CPT director Gene Stoltzfus, wearing the CPT red hat, with people in Najef, Iraq

CPT turns 20

A look at the first 20 years of Christian Peacemaker Teams under the leadership of Gene Stoltzfus

by Melanie Zuercher

Twenty years ago this summer, when Ron Sider electrified a relatively small group of Mennonites with his speech at the1984 Mennonite World Conference (MWC) assembly, no one imagined how far the ripples from his words would spread.

No one but Gene Stoltzfus, perhaps.

Sider, a Brethren in Christ professor at Eastern Baptist Seminary near Philadelphia, gave a keynote address at the MWC gathering in Strasbourg, France. In the speech, he outlined a vision for something like "teams of Christian peacemakers" who would go to places of conflict in the world and stand peacefully between the warring factions.

The idea took hold with what was then called the Peace Section of Mennonite Central Committee. Peace Section staff produced one pamphlet and Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., another. Between 1985 and 1986, study groups in Mennonite congregations across North America used the materials to talk about and help flesh out Sider's idea.

In late 1986, at a meeting of the Council of Moderators and Secretaries of what was then the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church, as well as the Brethren in Christ and Mennonite Brethren, met in Techny, Ill., and decided to form a steering committee for an organization to be called Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT).

In August 1987, that steering committee hired a half-time director for CPT, Gene Stoltzfus. Seventeen years later, Gene leaves the helm of an organization that has literally changed the meaning of "Mennonites" to people around the world.

Says Susan Mark Landis, current CPT Steering Committee member, "There was a time when people outside Mennonite circles knew us through John H. Yoder. Now they know us through [CPT], and they don't have to be able to read a book published in English to do so."

Gene came to CPT with more than two decades of peace and justice work behind him, in Vietnam, the Philippines and the United States.

Organized platoons: "I started to think about organizing peacemaker teams in the 1960s, when I was working in Vietnam," he says. "If the military can put together disciplined, organized platoons, Christians should be able to do the same in areas in the world where there is armed conflict. I always felt that Christians should be much more focused and disciplined in their peacemaking.

"In the early 1980s, we had the example of Witness for Peace in Central America. There was a wider cultural conviction in the peace and justice world that a group of people committed to peace

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Continued from page 11

We learned that functioning as an unapologetically Christian group is the way to go.
—Gene Stoltzfus

could 'get in the way' of armies and violence. Ron Sider articulated that from an authentic Christian perspective, which was a significant contribution."

One of the most important changes in CPT over the years, Gene says, has been the ecumenical character it has developed (see box). However, Mennonites were the core of CPT and remain the single largest denomination or group to contribute to CPT both financially and in terms of delegation members.

"When I go into Mennonite churches to speak, I'm often asked: 'Why are you talking to us—aren't we the choir?'" he says. "My response: 'I understand what Mennonites believe, but I'm not sure we're a choir.' A choir requires training, learning to interpret, being willing to submit to a group. You don't just throw anybody together and call that a choir. We Mennonites have been very individualistic in our peacemaking."

The ongoing challenge has been to build the "teams" in CPT's name. A big boost to CPT's self-confidence came in 1990, during the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Winnipeg.

CPT organized a witness at a Minuteman II missile silo in North Dakota. "We didn't know what kind of response we'd get," Gene says.

They got plenty—six buses and 30 cars and vans full of Mennonites, about 350 participants, enough to surround the silo site. "When we stopped in Winkler [Man.] for supper on the way back, there was such a sense of energy and buoyancy," Gene says. "It felt like we had the support out there—people wanted to do this."

Big splash: With the MWC witness, CPT also made its first big splash in the media (in this case, Winnipeg's), a tool the organization has continued to use with great effectiveness.

Perhaps no time was there so much publicity as in late 1990, when CPT sent its first delegation to Iraq, right before the outbreak of the first Gulf War. Among them, the 13 members of that delegation made at least 1,000 public appearances related to their visit to Iraq.

There has been almost as much publicity recently, as CPT was months ahead of the mainstream U.S. media in reporting abuse of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. military personnel and has been inundated with requests for interviews and information by that same media since they caught on as well.

In between, CPT has carried out projects directly with or in support of First Nations people in Labrador, New Brunswick, Quebec and northern Ontario, as well as with Lakota activists in South Dakota; in Haiti; in eastern Europe (Chechnya and Bosnia); with indigenous people in Chiapas, Mexico; on Vieques Island, Puerto Rico; with Palestinians in Hebron (ongoing) and other parts of Israel-Palestine; in the inner cities of Washington, D.C., and Richmond, Va.; and in Colombia (also current). Local CPT groups all over North America have regularly called attention to the sale of violent toys by large retailers and, with April 15 actions at post offices, to the amount of U.S. income taxes going for military purposes.

In the fall of 1992, CPT held its first Christian Peacemaker Corps training, from which emerged four full-time Corps members and three part-time Peace Reservists. "During this time," Gene says, "we were being pushed and cajoled to come to Haiti, and eventually we started our first long-term project, in Jérémie, Haiti.

"It was our quietest project—we were still learning. But it kept the Haitian military on notice that the world was watching. There was no phone contact in Jérémie, and this was before any kind of reliable email. But we learned that our presence can make a difference.

"We learned that functioning as an unapologetically Christian group is the way to go. We learned that short-term delegations can complement the work of the long-term people. Our full-timers could not do the public events because they weren't in Port-au-Prince, but the delegations could."

As CPT's work expanded, it continued to learn lessons. CPT decided to establish a long-term presence in Hebron, West Bank, in 1995 because it was one of the few places in Israel-Palestine that had no permanent human rights groups.

Selective public witness: "In Hebron, we cut our teeth in terms of learning how a small group could be effective doing selective public witness," such as symbolically opening the Hebron market, which remained closed despite the peace agreement mandate to open it. "We developed our confidence in our ability to relate to the larger diplomatic community."

Although CPT's presence in Hebron has "generally been positive," Gene says, "it's discouraging that no fundamental change has happened. But Hebron is on the map in a way it wouldn't have been otherwise."

CPT's work in Chiapas, Mexico, caused the organization to think more about developing local Christian Peacemaker groups, which in Chiapas would have combined the poorer indigenous people and more middle-class Ladinos. The effort wasn't successful there, but the CPT groups currently in Colombia include Colombians.

Developing such groups is one of the challenges Gene sees for CPT in the future. "This has major

ns 20

implications for how we understand ourselves as multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual."

Other challenges include how to respond to far more requests for CPT presence in hot spots around the world than CPT can possibly fill and constant work on the whole "team" nature of CPT—perhaps more so as the organization becomes increasingly ecumenical. From its original Mennonite and Brethren in Christ base, CPT added the Church of the Brethren and Friends United Meeting (Quakers) as supporters who are represented on the Steering Committee. In recent years, CPT has seen more Catholics and mainline Protestants in its delegations.

"The peace community is sort of like Mennonites—there are a lot of stubborn people who think they have a corner on what's right and righteous, people who also have big hearts. Stubbornness is a gift in terms of facing overwhelming and intractable problems, but it can make for difficult group dynamics. It's hard to integrate the strong soloists into the choir, but it can be done."

For now, Mennonites remain CPT's strong base. "We started this in the midst of denominational merger [between the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church], but we never felt like we were told to go away. Instead it was, 'We're really glad you're doing this—keep on even if it seems like no one's paying attention.'

"It's important that Mennonites and other peace churches warmly and consistently embrace this work. It's really basic: You don't kill someone just because you disagree with them. That's the biblical mandate."

Gene isn't sure exactly what he'll do after he concludes his time as CPT director on Aug. 31, but he expects to stay involved in peace work and to continue to support CPT. "For me, looking into the face of crisis and conditions that strike you with their violence—after a while, you get weary. I need some time to clean out," he says.

However, he adds quickly, "Crisis is the opportunity for transformation. That's not just nice language—I've experienced it."

"God's Spirit flows through Gene in a gushing river, and he is willing to give his entire being to stay with the flow," says Susan Mark Landis. "He has a sixth sense for nonviolence organizing. He knows how to network with justice groups around the globe. He prays and lives intimately with God. He's intense, compassionate and an honest friend."

Adds Kathleen Kern, who's been involved with CPT since 1992, "I will miss the way that he genuinely loved CPTers and took our concerns and needs seriously."

Carol Rose, who began July 12 as CPT co-director, working in the Chicago office while Doug Pritchard is co-director from the Ontario office, says, "One thing I value, that I hope I've learned to do from Gene, is his gift for taking the many-faceted and complex realities of social organizations, peace movements, wars and being able to look at that big picture and say, 'This is the direction God is moving,' or, 'This is where we're stuck.' Maybe that's political analysis. Maybe it's 'discerning the signs of the times,' to put it in more religious terms."

"The bottom line is that as Christians, we won't kill," says Gene. "We'll find some other way. The challenge is: How do you do that in the modern world? What's God's Spirit calling us to?"

Melanie Zuercher is writer/editor in the communications office of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and a member of Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton.

> Crisis is the opportunity for transformation. That's not just nice language—I've experienced it.
> —Gene Stoltzfus

CPT today

No. of full-time Peacemaker Corps members: 32
No. of part-time Reservists: 126
Supporting denominations: Church of the Brethren, Friends United Meeting, Mennonite Church USA
Denominational breakdown of Peacemaker Corps members:
  Mennonite – 15
  Catholic – 4
  Quaker – 3
  Lutheran – 3
  Methodist – 2
  Episcopalian – 2
  No specific denomination – 2
  Church of the Brethren – 1
Denominational percentages in Reserve Corps:
  Mennonite – 37
  Catholic/Catholic Worker – 11
  Quaker – 10
  Church of the Brethren – 9
  Presbyterian/Reformed – 7
  Non-specific Christian – 5
  Non-religious/secular – 5
  Episcopalian/Anglican – 4
  Methodist – 3
  United Church of Christ/Disciples of Christ – 3
  Baptist – 2
  Lutheran – 2
  Unitarian –1
  United Church of Canada – 1
No. of full-time staff members: 9 (5 are full-time Corps members, one is a Mennonite Voluntary Service worker)
No. of part-time staff members: 2 (both are CPT reservists also)
Budget (Year 2003): $893,000

Spiritual

An excerpt from Iraq: A Journey of Hope and Peace

by Peggy Faw Gish

It was my last week in Baghdad before leaving for the United States. And what a full week it was! A week of more bombing and violence but also a week of courageous and loving work that doesn't usually get reported. I was part of the hopeful vigil in Kerbala, the march to the CPA [Coalition Provisional Authority] headquarters, and the last regular vigil at Tahrir Square. I went to our Iraqi friends, saying good-bye and "Insha'alla—I will be back again." And I had a last visit to the Holy Family school and the orphanage.

Several changes had taken place in the orphanage since September. Two new infants, Mustafa and Ziad, added to the melee of the playroom. New toys abounded and new chairs allowed these disabled children to sit more comfortably. A group of U.S. soldiers came several afternoons a week to play with the them. While the soldiers were there, a Humvee and tank stood guard on the street in front of the door. But there was no change to the playful noises and sense of family. Because of my busy schedule, I had been able to join them only about once a week.

Pity and love don't go together.
Pity distances; love connects.

This day, while I sat among the children, singing and helping a large stuffed animal talk to them, a woman walked in hesitantly to greet them. She gently shook her head with a look of pity on her face and then left.

Her sentiment seemed out of place in this playful scene. Silently my heart shouted, "No! You are mistaken. They are not things to be pitied. They are real people. They are Nurah and Amid and Nashua. When I see Dunia's mischievous smile as she grabs a handkerchief out of my pocket or watch Ziad's sparkling eyes and trusting look, I don't see them as a girl with cerebral palsy or a boy with brain damage. I see them as beautiful little people who have much to give."

Pity and love don't go together. Pity distances; love connects. With pity they are looked at and treated as a tragedy or as misfits. With love they are seen as fully human and good. Love stops seeing the deformity and watches for the beauty and uniqueness to emerge in a smile or twinkle of the eye, or even in the stormy cry of pain or anger.

I think of a similar kind of sentiment many have when they think of a group of people suffering war or poverty, as the Iraqi people are today. If pitied, we can distance ourselves from their humanity and throw them some crumbs. We can feel generous because we are giving them something rather than fully embracing them as deserving of every good thing that others in our world enjoy and as fully competent to decide how their country should be restored.

With pity, we can begrudgingly pull some money out of our pockets to rebuild what the United States has destroyed, then give that money to our companies who "know best how to do it right" (and in the process put large profits in their pockets). With pity we can believe that we need to guide the Iraqis into democracy, thinking we know what is best for their society. We can use pity to cover up all kinds of paternalistic, dominating or oppressive policies.

In our CPT [Christian Peacemaker Teams] work among the Iraqi people, pity has no place. There's suffering, brokenness, anger and pain, but we are privileged to be among them to see their strength, generosity and creative spirit.

A newly arrived sister from India walked me to the door of the orphanage as I was ready to leave. As she thanked me, I said, "Thank you. I always receive more than I give." She responded, "Yes, that's the way it is with love."

It was March 15, 2004, and our CPT Iraq team had gathered for worship. Jane read the Scripture from John 1:5, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." She asked, "What does this Scripture passage say to us in this society torn by violence?"

In the time of quiet reflection I thought of one year earlier in the last days leading up to the war

resistance

We believe that the only way to solve the problems in Iraq is through turning around, changing directions (repentance) and establishing justice.

and during the bombing. The war seemed to be driven by the circle of decision-makers in the Bush administration. With jets poised and an ultimatum given to Saddam, war seemed inevitable.

But some of us resisted this way of thinking to the very end. We found ourselves engaged in a kind of spiritual resistance. Some thought us unrealistic and impractical. It wasn't that we had any illusions about the Bush administration's capability of doing such a thing or thought it couldn't happen. We didn't want to get caught in a mindset that bought into it, got stuck in it and could no longer see possibilities for creative action. We did not want the culture of fear and hopelessness to paralyze us and to swallow up the light in this intense unleashing of violence.

Do we make statements of faith and then let the darkness creep into our consciousness? Do we let the darkness take over and shape our worldview and lead us to believe that the answer to the world's problems lies with having superior force or that this war was the only way to deal with or get rid of an evil dictator? Christians even create theologies of how Jesus couldn't have really meant that we should love our enemy or that nonviolent, suffering love is more powerful than violence or evil. Some say, "We have to be practical in today's world."

One powerful way the Iraqi people defied the darkness during the war was to start the call to prayer every time the bombing would start. Over the loud speakers of the mosques, we would hear, "Allah Akbar! (God is the greatest, or God is greater!)" God is more powerful than the greatest military power in the world. This call to prayer did not stop the bombing, but it helped prevent the bombing from breaking the spirit of the people.

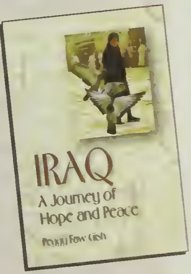
Some of it may have been our own craziness or stubbornness mixed in, but I couldn't help but think that our resisting the inevitability of war had some connection with the passage about the light triumphing over darkness.

In our CPT work today we resist getting caught in the mindset of the occupation system, which sees the Iraqi people through the eyes of fear and suspicion. We refuse to accept the mindset that anyone resisting the U.S. occupation is a terrorist. We resist seeing either Iraqi or U.S. soldiers as our enemies or believing that violence is the only way to combat terrorism. We choose to see things through the worldview of Jesus and the prophets, so we believe that the only way to solve the problems in Iraq is through turning around, changing directions (repentance) and establishing justice. But that means giving up U.S. domination in Iraq.

Is it possible to walk, live and work in a system of horrendous, overt structural violence without being overcome by it? How can we do it today here in Iraq, the United States or any other nation?

This article is excerpted with permission from Iraq: A Journey of Hope and Peace *by Peggy Faw Gish, just published by Herald Press. Since 1995, Peggy has been involved with Christian Peacemaker Teams in the West Bank and Iraq.*

Iraq: A Journey of Hope and Peace by Peggy Faw Gish (Herald Press, 2004, $17.99) is just out. In it readers get a glimpse of what it's like to serve with Christian Peacemaker Teams. Twenty years after the germ of the idea for this organization (see story, page 11), CPT is active around the globe in various hot spots, including Colombia, the West Bank and Iraq. Gish offers a personal account of being a committed worker for peace in a situation of conflict that leads to war. The book's epigraph, a quote of Dorothy Day, popularizing a saying by Fyodor Dostoevsky, is telling: "Love in action is a harsh and dreadful thing, compared to love in dreams." We learn from this book that dreaming of peace and working for peace are two different things. Working for peace is messy, heartbreaking, filled with daily choices that require courage and commitment to Jesus' way of peace. Gish is honest about her fears and questions: "Were we crazy, as many had suggested?" Yet she clings to the "armor we hoped to use: that of truth, faith and 'the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.'" This timely book gives us a different view of Iraq than what we get from the mainstream U.S. media. It lets us see the human beings whose lives are being turned upside-down by this war. Gish shows the importance of prayer and worship to the work of CPT. It is less a political diatribe than a testimony of the power of the gospel, Jesus' good news that God is the One who rules.—*Gordon Houser*



Tragic zeal

by Darrin W. Belousek

No one created in God's image and for whom Christ died can be for me an enemy, whose life I am willing to threaten or to take, unless I am more devoted to something else—to a political theory, to a nation, to the defense of certain privileges, or to my own personal welfare—than I am to God's cause: his loving invasion of this world in his prophets, his Son, and his church.—John Howard Yoder, *He Came Preaching Peace*

The people of the United States and in many other nations remember the events of Sept. 11, 2001—the horrific sight of the terrorist attacks and collapse of the Twin Towers, and the heroic actions of firefighters, police officers and ordinary folks. On that day three years ago, we saw the stark contradiction between those willing to take their own lives to take the lives of others and those willing to risk their lives to save the lives of others. Commentators likened 9-11 to the attack on Pearl Harbor, "a day that will live in infamy."

One year ago, the United States witnessed another day that should "live in infamy." On Sept. 3, 2003, the state of Florida executed anti-abortion activist-terrorist and former minister Paul Hill for the murder of an abortionist and his escort in 1994. This event showed us another glaring contradiction. In the name of "we the people," a government killed a man who had been willing to kill another using the same perverse logic—namely, killing a defenseless person in the name of defending the defenseless lives of others. This event singularly reveals America's descent along a spiral of violence toward a culture of death.

As the people of God, we are no longer to adapt ourselves to this tragic pattern of this age.

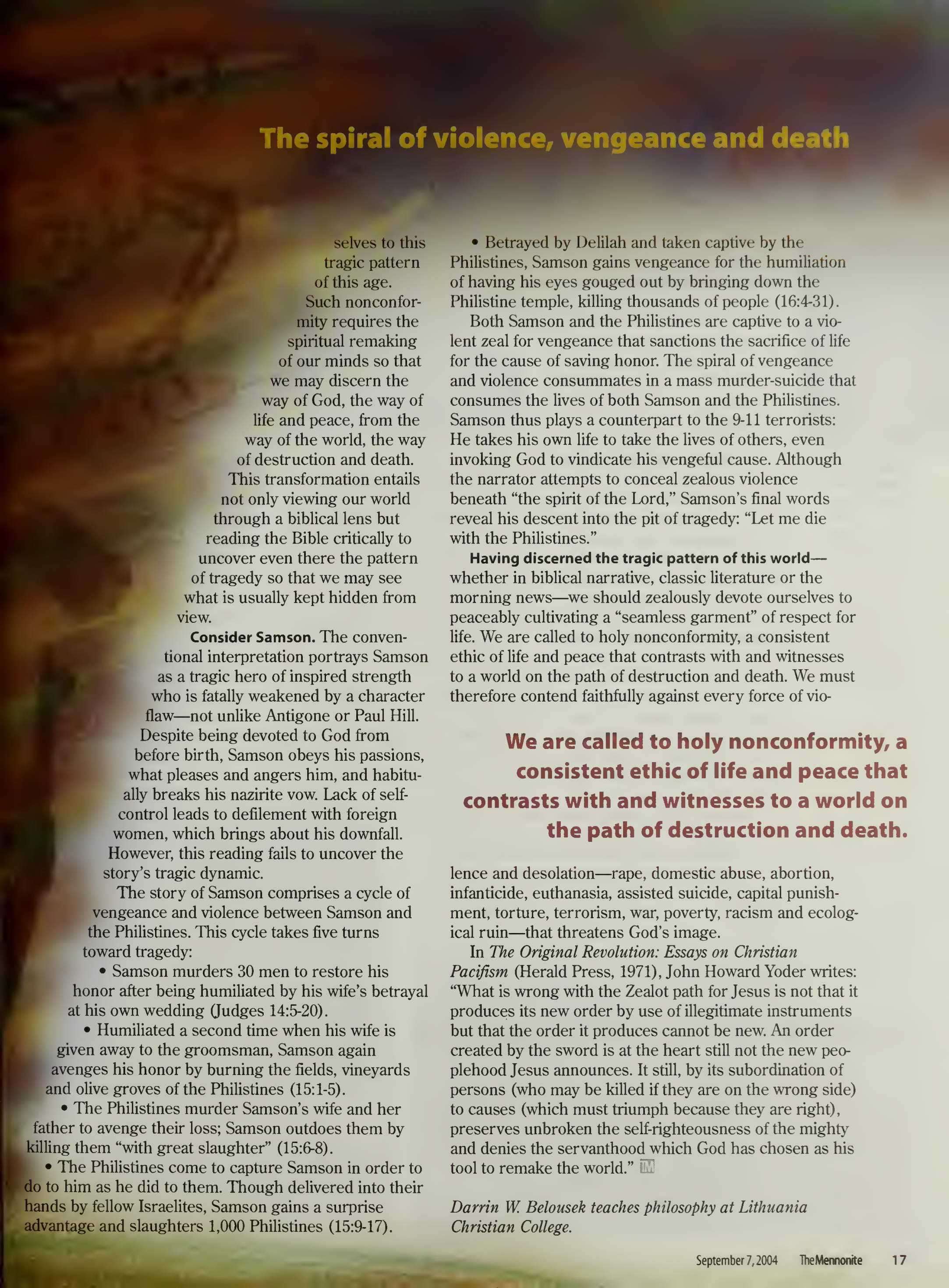
This death spiral took three turns. Some sought to end certain problems by abortion; and another willingly and legally aided in the killing of the unborn. Yet another, who claimed to believe life is sacred, sought to end abortion by killing the abortionist. The state, whose laws do not protect equally the life of the abortionist and the unborn, sought to end murder by killing the murderer.

This calls to mind Sophocles' classic play *Antigone*. While it is obvious that both Creon and Antigone are headstrong, we are inclined to think one of them should have yielded first. But this misses the depth of the tragedy. Each character is zealously devoted to a cause he or she believes is worthy of sacrificing life: Polyneices is devoted to seizing power, Creon to entrenching his authority, Antigone to her family and piety, Haemon to his betrothed and Eurydice to her son. All the actors are blinded by their zeal from seeing wisdom, represented in the figure of the blind prophet Teiresias, and this bondage to passion prevents them from acting prudentially. And therein lies the tragedy. Polyneices' act of treachery begets Creon's act of arrogance, which begets Antigone's act of defiance, which sets off a spiral of death: a death sentence is followed by suicide, which is followed by attempted murder and accidentally self-inflicted death, which is followed by another suicide.

Our real-life story parallels the classic drama. We are tempted to blame the tragic outcome of Sept. 3, 2003, on one of the principal players. The problem, some said, is that Paul Hill's character was fatally flawed by moral contradiction. The state's stubborn insistence on a death penalty, others argued, only made a martyr of Hill, strengthening his vigilante cause. The root of the problem, said others, is the women who sought abortions and the abortionists who performed them—or the circumstances that "necessitate" the "choice" of abortion in the first place. Each explanation may have some merit, but each misses the crucial point.

Each of the principal figures is zealously devoted to a political or moral cause that supposedly justifies violence, the deliberate taking of life, if necessary—the abortionist is devoted to "pro-choice," the activist-terrorist to "pro-life" and the state to "justice." Yet all the actors are blinded by their zealotry to the image of God in each person. Bondage to passion prevents them from seeing the other as one for whom Christ died. And therein lies the tragedy. Elevating their respective causes to ultimate value, each sees the life of another not as a redeemable gift of God but as a mere means that can be sacrificed to some other end. For the abortionist, the unborn is an obstacle to "liberation"; for the activist-terrorist, the abortionist is a threat to "life"; for the state, the activist-terrorist is an offense against "justice." Thus a tragic sequence of zeal, violence and death ensues: The state takes the life of the activist-terrorist for taking the life of the abortionist for taking the life of the unborn.

As the people of God, we are no longer to adapt our-



The spiral of violence, vengeance and death

selves to this tragic pattern of this age. Such nonconformity requires the spiritual remaking of our minds so that we may discern the way of God, the way of life and peace, from the way of the world, the way of destruction and death. This transformation entails not only viewing our world through a biblical lens but reading the Bible critically to uncover even there the pattern of tragedy so that we may see what is usually kept hidden from view.

Consider Samson. The conventional interpretation portrays Samson as a tragic hero of inspired strength who is fatally weakened by a character flaw—not unlike Antigone or Paul Hill. Despite being devoted to God from before birth, Samson obeys his passions, what pleases and angers him, and habitually breaks his nazirite vow. Lack of self-control leads to defilement with foreign women, which brings about his downfall. However, this reading fails to uncover the story's tragic dynamic.

The story of Samson comprises a cycle of vengeance and violence between Samson and the Philistines. This cycle takes five turns toward tragedy:

- Samson murders 30 men to restore his honor after being humiliated by his wife's betrayal at his own wedding (Judges 14:5-20).
- Humiliated a second time when his wife is given away to the groomsman, Samson again avenges his honor by burning the fields, vineyards and olive groves of the Philistines (15:1-5).
- The Philistines murder Samson's wife and her father to avenge their loss; Samson outdoes them by killing them "with great slaughter" (15:6-8).
- The Philistines come to capture Samson in order to do to him as he did to them. Though delivered into their hands by fellow Israelites, Samson gains a surprise advantage and slaughters 1,000 Philistines (15:9-17).
- Betrayed by Delilah and taken captive by the Philistines, Samson gains vengeance for the humiliation of having his eyes gouged out by bringing down the Philistine temple, killing thousands of people (16:4-31).

Both Samson and the Philistines are captive to a violent zeal for vengeance that sanctions the sacrifice of life for the cause of saving honor. The spiral of vengeance and violence consummates in a mass murder-suicide that consumes the lives of both Samson and the Philistines. Samson thus plays a counterpart to the 9-11 terrorists: He takes his own life to take the lives of others, even invoking God to vindicate his vengeful cause. Although the narrator attempts to conceal zealous violence beneath "the spirit of the Lord," Samson's final words reveal his descent into the pit of tragedy: "Let me die with the Philistines."

Having discerned the tragic pattern of this world—whether in biblical narrative, classic literature or the morning news—we should zealously devote ourselves to peaceably cultivating a "seamless garment" of respect for life. We are called to holy nonconformity, a consistent ethic of life and peace that contrasts with and witnesses to a world on the path of destruction and death. We must therefore contend faithfully against every force of violence and desolation—rape, domestic abuse, abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, assisted suicide, capital punishment, torture, terrorism, war, poverty, racism and ecological ruin—that threatens God's image.

We are called to holy nonconformity, a consistent ethic of life and peace that contrasts with and witnesses to a world on the path of destruction and death.

In *The Original Revolution: Essays on Christian Pacifism* (Herald Press, 1971), John Howard Yoder writes: "What is wrong with the Zealot path for Jesus is not that it produces its new order by use of illegitimate instruments but that the order it produces cannot be new. An order created by the sword is at the heart still not the new peoplehood Jesus announces. It still, by its subordination of persons (who may be killed if they are on the wrong side) to causes (which must triumph because they are right), preserves unbroken the self-righteousness of the mighty and denies the servanthood which God has chosen as his tool to remake the world."

Darrin W. Belousek teaches philosophy at Lithuania Christian College.

Help eliminate global debt

Celeste Kennel-Shank, a Goshen (Ind.) College senior, spent the summer as communications intern at Jubilee USA Network. She attends Community of Christ in Washington and Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen.

When many Mennonites hear about Jubilee USA Network, they are surprised. Several members of East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa., told me they attended the Jubilee demonstration in April 2000 but thought the organization no longer existed.

The Jubilee movement is still working for the cancellation of debts owed to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund by the world's poorest countries. In the next few months the network is calling for people of faith to rally again.

"This is an absolutely critical moment in the struggle for freedom from debt, which is literally bleeding countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America of resources they desperately need to fight AIDS, poverty and disease," says Marie Clarke, national coordinator of Jubilee USA Network.

At this June's 6-8 Summit, a meeting of the leaders of the world's most powerful countries, the United Kingdom proposed 100 percent debt cancellation. Though they failed to act then, the finance ministers of seven wealthiest nations may make the decision when they meet on Oct. 1.

For every day on which poor nations' debt is not fully cancelled, 19,000 children die from treatable diseases, 14,000 adults and children are infected with the HIV virus and more than 1 billion people lack access to clean water.

For every day on which poor nations' debt is not fully cancelled, 19,000 children die from treatable diseases, 14,000 adults and children are infected with the HIV virus and more than a billion people lack access to clean water.

With a current debt of $333 billion, African countries pay $1.51 in debt service for every $1 they get in aid. Money sent by churches through Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Central Committee often pays for services such as education, health care and sanitation, which are too expensive for the average citizen of a poor nation. When debt has been cancelled, governments have been able to provide services to their people. In Tanzania, 1.6 million children returned to school after user fees, required with World Bank and IMF reforms, were removed.

With government providing social services, money from churches could go to leadership training, peace building or working with youth.

This summer, Jubilee USA Network, with the help of member organizations such as Mennonite Central Committee, launched a countdown to freedom from debt.

"The people of faith and conscience that are part of Jubilee USA across the country will be turning up the heat on the White House and Treasury," says Clarke. "The global community needs action on debt, and we have a deadline: Oct. 1."

Churches that travel with mission or service trips to a developing country can use that opportunity to talk to people in that nation about how external debt is affecting them, then relay that information to decision makers in the United States.

Churches can also help build the Jubilee movement by talking about debt and its connection to global poverty in Sunday school classes, sewing circles, youth groups or peace committees.

This could be the year when 100 percent cancellation of debts for many of the world's poorest countries is achieved.

"The Judeo-Christian Jubilee Scriptures compel nations and communities to cancel debt in order to build right relationships," says Adam Taylor, a Baptist minister and Jubilee board member. "In this world broken by AIDS, war and economic injustice, there is no time to waste." TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Are Mennonites sacramental?**—Tom Finger
- **In celebration of everyday worship**—Richard L. Bowman
- **Why we pray for the president but cannot support the war**—Levi Miller

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Keim is Hesston's presidential candidate

The former professor returns after eight years as dean at nearby Tabor College.

Michael Zollinger

Howard Keim is the Hesston (Kan.) College presidential search committee's candidate of choice. Norm Yoder of Henderson, Neb., chairs the search committee and made the announcement on campus Sept. 3.

Keim is vice president of academics and student development and associate professor of communications at Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kan. Tabor is a four-year liberal arts institution owned and operated by the Mennonite Brethren Church.

Keim will visit the Hesston campus Sept. 7-8 to meet with various groups and individuals. The search committee will review input from this process and make a final recommendation on Keim's candidacy early this fall. Hesston's president is appointed by Mennonite Education Agency (MEA) with the recommendation of the Hesston board.

"MEA represents Mennonite Church USA and is a partner with the Hesston College board in both the search process and presidential appointment," says MEA executive director Carlos Romero.

MEA board chair Rosalind Andreas of Essex Junction, Vt., expressed appreciation for this partnership.

"We on the MEA board are most grateful to the search committee for its dedicated and vigorous work … resulting in a candidate of Dr. Keim's qualifications and experience. We look forward to his visit with the Hesston College community and the discernment that will follow there," she said.

Keim, who lives in Hesston, received a doctorate in communication studies from the University of Kansas, a master's degree in interpersonal and public communication from Central Michigan University and a bachelor's degree in speech and dramatic arts from the same institution. He also studied at the University of Iowa and is a 1972 graduate of Hesston. His wife, Tami, graduated from Hesston and has directed its Early Childhood Education Program since 1987.

Keim has been a professor and administrator at Tabor College since 1996. He taught at Hesston from 1987 to 1996, including directing its Pastoral Ministries Program. He was pastor of Kalona (Iowa) Mennonite Church from 1979 to 1987 and youth minister at Fairview (Mich.) Mennonite Church prior to that. Keim has served his congregation, Whitestone Mennonite Church in Hesston, as an elder. He is a former moderator of South Central Mennonite Conference of Mennonite Church USA and serves on the conference ministerial commission.

"Dr. Keim's experience as an academic dean, teacher, pastor and director of Hesston's Pastoral Ministries Program gives him valuable leadership experience," Yoder said. "His collaborative leadership style would serve Hesston well. Hesston College has a great future, and Dr. Keim has the vision to help good people do great things."*—joint release from Hesston College Board of Overseers and Mennonite Education Agency*

Hesston College has a great future, and Dr. Keim has the vision to help good people do great things. —Norm Yoder

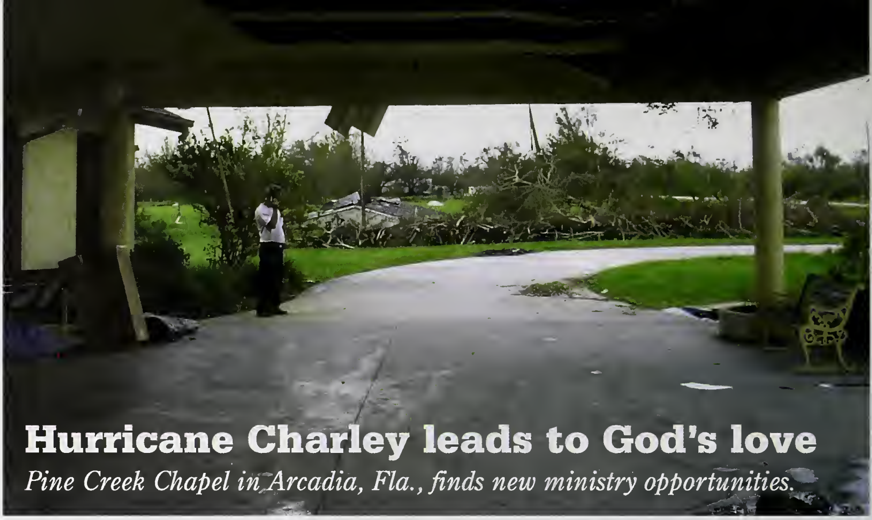
BLUFFTON
UNIVERSITY
1899
Courtesy photo

Name change

Bluffton (Ohio) College has officially changed its name to Bluffton University. On Aug. 1 the new name was unveiled at the new entrance to campus by Stephen Jacoby (left), chair of faculty, and Lee Snyder (right), president.

The Francisco family
would like to
thank everyone who
embraced them in their
earthly loss of
Pastor Steven Francisco.
Your words, acts of
concern, comfort and
compassion during this
time were an
encouragement to us.
May God bless you.

Pastor Steven H. Francisco
March 12, 1959 -
July 6, 2004



An unidentified volunteer makes a cell phone call outside Pine Creek Chapel. The roof from the church's pavilion lies in the background.

Marlin Birkey

Hurricane Charley leads to God's love

Pine Creek Chapel in Arcadia, Fla., finds new ministry opportunities.

Hurricane Charley, rated a category four hurricane and packing winds up to 145 mph, ripped through many communities in southwest Florida on Aug. 13. In the wake of its path, many homes were destroyed as roofs were ripped off; mobile homes went down like matchsticks. Oaks that had stood for years are now splintered and broken. Many other trees are uprooted, which leaves us feeling shattered.

One of the communities in which the storm wreaked havoc is Arcadia, an inland town that felt safe from coastal hurricanes. Two Mennonite congregations are in Arcadia: Pine Creek Chapel, a member of Southeast Mennonite Conference and Peace River Mennonite Church, member of Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. Both churches sustained roof damage.

Marlin Birkey

Dave and Esther Kniss, Arcadia, Fla., stand by the storm damage at their home. Dave is the former pastor of Pine Creek Chapel, and both are still members there.

A team from Pine Creek Chapel that had received Red Cross training helped direct the more than 1,200 evacuees who came to the large Turner Agri-Civic Center in Arcadia on the day of the hurricane. The building was selected by the Red Cross as a shelter because it was built to be wind-resistant.

But as the vicious storm moved over the center, a corner of the high-domed roof buckled and whipped open, exposing open sky. The Pine Creek team reported that at first people wondered if the roof would collapse on them or if they would die. But these questions were soon replaced by a feeling of God's wings sheltering those inside. All came through it safely.

Even without electricity, the Pine Creek congregation gathered two days after the storm on Sunday morning to hear each other's stories, talk about their feelings and sing praise to God. People said that God came through with his presence in a time of uncertainty and fear.

Within days after the storm, about 25 volunteers arrived to do emergency roof repair on two churches, and a day later more volunteers rolled into our community, bringing heavy Bobcat equipment and many chain saws.

The whirl of chain saws is already speaking to unchurched neighbors. It is a testimony of God's love to those hurting. As carloads of supplies and food arrived at Pine Creek Chapel in the following days, we realized what an opportunity of ministry God was giving to us as we saw our neighbors coming through the church doors to receive aid, then staying on to talk about their hurts and fears. We expect to see many miracles in people's lives as they experience this outpouring of God's love in the weeks and months ahead, which could lengthen into years. God's presence has not been demolished.—*Esther Kniss*

Leaders make plans to pass on legacies

African-American Mennonite Association celebrates financial recovery.

Last spring, when the Ingelwood, Calif., police were caught on videotape beating Donovan Jackson, ministers expected their African-American neighborhoods to erupt in violence similar to the reaction after the 1992 Rodney King beatings. So they began working to keep the peace even before the verdict was announced.

"We put signs and banners up saying, 'Peace After the Verdict' and people began to ask what they would do," said Alvin Isaacs, pastor at Calvary Christian Fellowship in Inglewood. "After the verdict, we opened up the churches … and nothing happened. It was perfect peace."

That kind of proactive peacemaking was the focus of Isaac's address to the African-American Mennonite Association convention Aug. 14 at Bethel Community Church in Chicago. The story reminded AAMA leaders to pass on a peacemaking legacy to the next generation.

"It's imperative that we start thinking about the next generation," AAMA president Leslie Francisco III said in the convention's opening session. "I tell my congregation I've done what I'm going to do, and it's time to get the next generation involved."

Francisco leads the 2,000-member Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Va., and serves as bishop for congregations in his Virginia Mennonite Conference district.

The next generation was clearly involved at this AAMA convention. More than 30 youth from congregations across the country joined the convention for the opening session. The three plenary speakers focused on what current leaders want to pass along as their legacies. In addition to peacemaking in urban settings, AAMA leaders said they wanted to pass along legacies of worship and direct involvement in their communities.

"There was a price to pay for the freedoms we have today," said Francisco. "It is a travesty when an election comes along and we don't exercise that right."

But several speakers also described rights that are not yet afforded to African-American members in the Mennonite church today. Mennonite Central Committee staff member Michelle Armster reported on the difficulties confronting people of color in the MCC Central States office; MCC determined last year that the North Newton, Kan., office's work environment was hostile to people of color (see "MCC Administrator Asked to Resign," Oct. 7, 2003). Armster challenged AAMA members to get involved in such situations or risk losing relevancy for the next generation of African Americans.

"Young people of color are leaving the church because they don't want to take it," Armster said. "There are more people of color working in church institutions … but the environment has been hostile. Let's not forget that we were once slaves."

Everett J. Thomas

More than 30 youth from across the United States joined the 2004 African-American Mennonite Assembly's biennial convention in Chicago Aug.13-15.

Kenneth Lee Thompson, pastor at Friendship Community Church in Bronx, N.Y., confirmed the challenges in Mennonite Church USA during his closing message and called for action.

"We need to be sure our people are as welcome in Mennonite Church USA board rooms as they are in MCC food pantries," said Thompson. "We cannot rest until every person of color has full opportunity for employment and full access to ministry."

The convention's business session hit a celebratory note as AAMA board member Zenobia Sowell-Bianchi presented a positive financial statement. In 1996, the AAMA budget had a deficit of $16,237 but now has assets totaling $39,563.

"We are in the black, and that's a blessing," said Sowell-Bianchi. "The debt has been cancelled."

Francisco wanted AAMA members to know, however, that the debt was cancelled "because we paid it, not because it was wiped away."

Rozier

The financial news was not so positive for one of the key programs AAMA counts on for training congregational leaders—the Lark program. Director Karla Francisco, whose husband, Stephen, died unexpectedly on July 6 ("Pastor's Death Shocks Church," July 20), announced that for the first time the program cannot accept new students, after disbursing $41,495 for 11 students last year.

"All available funds are depleted," Karla Francisco said. Four applicants for the 2003-2004 academic year were denied funding as well as three summer students. Jacqueline Rozier, a church planter in Ohio, was the lone Lark graduate for the 2003-2004 academic year. She received a Master of Arts in Christian Ministry from Ashland (Ohio) Theological Seminary in June.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Comes From the Lord
PSA

Dan Dyck

Biennial convention joins Native people

Three organizations hear proposal for new Mennonite Church USA group.

The 235 people that gathered for Native Assembly 2004 included this Choctaw group from Philadelphia, Miss., that sang for the gathering.

The biennial Native Assembly was held jointly by Mennonite Indian Leaders Council (MILC), United Native Ministries (UNM) and Native Ministries of Canada (NMC) July 26-29 in Riverton, Man., at the Riverton Recreation Center. Riverton Fellowship Circle hosted the assembly.

"Our Help Comes from the Lord" was the theme for the week. Youth spent the week at Matheson Island and had a program that ran concurrently. Children had their program across the street from the main assembly.

The opening ceremony included a presentation of banners from the various Native churches and a mini gospel jamboree. The week included lots of singing and sharing from all the native churches. A highlight of the assembly for many of the participants was the inclusion of cultural activities and tours of nearby Native lands. Speakers for the worship services were Lawrence Hart, Howard Jolly, Juanita Nunez and Barbara Shoomski.

One speaker referred to mountains where God spoke and a mountain that had significance in his life. Another spoke about the names and attributes of God and who we are in him.

Another encouraged people to know their stories and not forget who they are because they are Christians. She said that we don't all need to be the same and asked how Christian people of all nations can become equal under God. She also said that it hurts when people come to Native people like they are teaching them something new.

[A speaker said] it hurts when people come to native people like they are teaching them something new.

Many workshops were offered, including two designed to give direction on the Native organizations. One gave information on the proposed new Mennonite Church USA Native organization. The other talked about the vision for Native ministry in Canada and an upcoming staff transition.—*from a report by Kenyetta Aduma of Mennonite Church USA's Office of Intercultural Relations*

2004-2006 Leaders Mennonite Church Racial/Ethnic Associate Groups

African- American Mennonite Association (AAMA)
- President Leslie Francisco III
  Newport News, Va.

Iglesia Menonita Hispaña (IMH)
- Moderator Byron Pellecer
  Miami

Mennonite Indian Leaders Council (MILC)
- President Marvin Yoyokie
  Kykotsmovi, Ariz.

Native Ministries Canada (NMC)
- Director Marvin Franz
  Winnipeg, Manitoba

United Native Ministries Council (UNMC)
- President Olivette McGhee
  Atmore, Ala.

Gordon Houser

Hispanic Mennonites develop identity

Delegates agree to support women in pastoral ministry, work on education.

Iglesia Menonita Hispaña (the Hispanic Mennonite Church) came into being two years ago in Goshen, Ind. At its first biennial meeting since then, Aug. 19-21 in Kansas City, Mo., IMH focused on unity and continued to work at developing its new identity.

Part of that work of identity was looking at a constitution. IMH represents more than 120 congregations in nine regions. (A region consists of at least five congregations.) Each region has a representative on the IMH board. One of those regions is Canada (six congregations in Alberta and British Columbia), and the question remains whether or not Canadian congregations will be members. Of the 37 delegates at this meeting, none was from Canada.

The sermons in the three worship times focused on John 17 and the theme "United That the World May Believe," and executive director Juan Montes called for a spirit of unity in which all the regions feel a part of IMH. Each region represented gave a report, as did those representing youth, women and education.

Gordon Houser

The education commission is looking at the idea of a missional academy, said Rafael Barahona, director of the Hispanic Ministries program at Goshen (Ind.) College. The commission recognizes, however, that it will want to work with seminaries and with Mennonite Education Agency. "Everything is in process," he said.

Barahona also lamented the paucity of funds for education coming from IMH congregations. "Education is expensive, but ignorance is even more expensive," he said.

The delegates discussed a proposal to meet jointly with other racial-ethnic groups in two years but left the decision to the IMH executive committee. They also passed three resolutions: (1) to allow Iowa congregations to be part of the Illinois-Indiana region, (2) to support the pastoral ministry of women and (3) to oppose racism and ask Mennonite Church USA to conduct a racism audit.

IMH elected Samuel Lopez of New Holland, Pa., moderator-elect. Marco Güete of Cedar Hill, Texas, turned over his duties as moderator to Byron Pellecer of Miami. A listening committee report asked, What is the purpose of the IMH assembly? Beyond the worship, fellowship and business, that is still being worked out in this young organization.—*Gordon Houser*

Family members of the musicians join in intercessory prayer (above) while new IMH moderator (facing camera, bottom left) Byron Pellecer joins other leaders.

The question remains whether or not Canadian congregations will be members of IMH.

Denomination leads interchurch talks

Other Christians could help Anabaptists reconcile over divisive issues.

A Mennonite Church USA-sponsored consultation July 13-15 in South Bend, Ind., helped participants—pastors, theologians, educators, peace group representatives and members of Mennonite Church USA's executive leadership team—consider greater cooperation and understanding with other Christian traditions, including Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox.

Jesus' calling for unity in John 17 is an imperative to be obeyed and not something we do only if we feel like it.—Al Meyer

Seeking new relationships does not mean diffusing Anabaptist distinctiveness, participants said. But it will mean airing differences in the light of God's grace and sharing gifts and strengths, as well as needs and weaknesses. It will mean promoting mutual growth in theological understandings and dreaming of future joint efforts in peacemaking and evangelism.

"Jesus' calling for unity in John 17 is an imperative to be obeyed and not something we do only if we feel like it," said Al Meyer, volunteer director for Mennonite Church USA interchurch relations and planner for the consultation.

Panel discussions helped participants grapple with what it means to be "mutual pioneers" with those from other traditions. Non-Mennonite panelists included Stanley Hauerwas, professor of theological ethics at Duke University Divinity School, Durham, N.C.; Rodney Clapp of Brazos Press; David Burrell, C.S.C., former chair of the theology department at Notre Dame University, South Bend; and Glen Stassen, professor of Christian ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif.

"What you bring to the table is an extraordinary rethinking of Christian theology, and the great discovery at the heart of your movement was simply, Jesus," Hauerwas said. "Michael Sattler looks kind of simple next to Martin Luther, but that is part of the genius."

Clapp said he believes that Mennonites are the most realistic of all Christians.

"You remind us all that we cannot see the world as it really is outside the realism of Christ," he said. Stassen encouraged Mennonite-Anabaptists to choose Pentecostals as dialogue partners.

"Pentecostals praise Jesus and follow Jesus and don't have a thick exegesis but simply say, 'Here's what it means to follow him,'" he said. "They began as pacifists but lacked the deep arguments, and these convictions got lost."

After receiving challenges from panelists and working in small groups for two days, participants suggested some possible next steps on the pathway to relationships with other traditions.

Their suggestions for Mennonite Church USA included building relationships with peace fellowships in other denominations, joining a church association such as Christian Churches Together in the USA, and encouraging Mennonite congregations to join other churches in reaching out to their communities.

It also may include helping Anabaptists reconcile over divisive issues by eliciting the help of itinerant evangelists, ensuring that the scope of interchurch exploration includes networking locally, regionally and globally, creating practical ministries and continuing the healing of memories with such groups as the Catholics, Lutherans and Reformers over issues that caused Anabaptist martyrdom.—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Correction: The Mennoville Mennonite Church building in El Reno, Okla., was built in 1893. The date was incorrect in the Aug. 17 issue

MEDA gets $5.6 million to fight mosquitoes

Mennonite Economic Development Associates has received a two-year, $5.6 million contract from the government of Tanzania to expand its war against mosquitoes and malaria in Africa. The contract will make MEDA the logistics contractor for the new Tanzania National Voucher Scheme, which aims to make insecticide-treated mosquito nets affordable to low income families. The two-year contract, funded by the Global Fund for Malaria and several other organizations, is the largest project ever managed by MEDA.

MEDA will manage the entire logistics component of the National Voucher Scheme. This involves all activities related to printing and distributing the vouchers, the retail distribution systems and collecting and redeeming the discount vouchers from participating businesses. A special target for promotion will be prenatal clinics, as pregnant women are highly vulnerable to malaria. The project, managed by Jerry Quigley (right, with a supply of the nets), may end up employing 45 people in Tanzania.—*MEDA News Service*

MALARIA FIGHTER
Net Ya Mbu
et Ya M

AIDS takes Chad parents from families

Pastor asks churches for one cup of grain each week for orphans left homeless.

Aids Care kit
EXPIRATION DATE
LOG

Mugabe Andrew (left) was one of the first AIDS patients to receive supplies from a Mennonite Central Committee AIDS Care Kit, which includes soap, towels, sheets and other supplies. Andrew is suffering from a number of AIDS-related illnesses. Nurse Christine Nabulya (right) from the Mengo Hospital Home Care Team, an MCC partner based in Kampala, hands out supplies from the kits for patients to use in their homes.

Dave Klassen

His body is weak and in pain, but he can still share a smile with others. His age and his name are unknown, though he can speak. Until today the abandoned boy has remained unknown to any of the village elders. The orphans who discovered him have named him "Perdu," which in French means "lost."

They surround him protectively, draping arms over his shoulder and swatting away flies from his face. They know what it is to be abandoned and have adopted him as one of their own, providing whatever food they can spare. But it is not enough.

"The first thing we must do is give him a proper name," says Levy Madjibe, West Africa representative for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). According to Levy, the boy was most likely abandoned by his mother, too weak from AIDS to take care of him any longer and ashamed to ask for help.

It is a common story, and children taking care of children is no longer an uncommon sight in Chad, a country of 9 million, where the AIDS rate has nearly doubled in the last two years, climbing to an estimated 8 percent of the population.

One of the many cascading problems resulting from the epidemic is the growing number of AIDS orphans. In N'djamena, the capital, local MCC partners are flooded with requests from orphans and family members for aid. Not all can be helped, and families are often turned away or separated.

"The rest are for God to take care of," says an orphan coordinator at Centre d'Education a la Vie Familiale, an MCC partner in N'djamena. "Someday we will take care of all the orphans," she adds hopefully. The orphans that are received are found homes and supplied with sacks of cereal as well as clothing and tuition for school.

The problem of AIDS orphans is not limited to the city and extends throughout the countryside. Those who would help orphans have difficulty finding them due to the remote geography and limited road access to many village populations. In addition, AIDS remains a taboo subject in most rural areas. Many AIDS victims are reluctant or unable to make arrangements for their children due to local prejudice and discrimination. The best way to locate new orphans is often through other orphans.

In many families where subsistence farming is a way of life, the oldest brother or sister simply becomes the head of the household after the parents die. In Pala, Sahba, 19, and his sister Gapnonta, 16, are taking care of two younger siblings after losing their parents to AIDS.

Gapnonta attends school in the morning and tends fields in the afternoon. Her own childhood is over, but she does her best to ensure her siblings are provided for and able to smile once in a while.

An MCC partner, the Ethics, Peace and Justice Department (EPJ) of the national Protestant Council of Churches, has enlisted local churches to support orphans. Pastor Yasa, the director of EPJ, hopes the churches will take a more active role in caring for the orphans. He invokes several passages from Deuteronomy regarding the churches' responsibility to care for orphans while discussing the problem.

"This is the churches' work," he says. "Pastors must set the example."

Yasa repeats this message to pastors and church committee members in rural villages. Some walk long distances to listen to his testimony. Yasa explains that even small donations like one cup of millet per week from church members can help an orphan significantly. Church leaders say they are eager to organize their congregations to aid orphans in their communities.

"Right now we are crawling," says one pastor. "But soon we will walk."

As AIDS spreads, Perdu and many other orphans are relying on whatever help their communities can provide.

Levy Madjibe says, "That boy may very well be Jesus Christ walking among us today, curious to see our response."—*Jed Payne of Mennonite Central Committee News Service*

That boy may very well be Jesus Christ walking among us today, curious to see our response.
—Levy Madjibe

WORKERS

Burkholder, Brian Martin, was ordained June 13 as campus pastor of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

Crockett, Maria, was ordained Aug. 8 as pastor at House of Power Fellowship, Elkhart, Ind.

Kniss, Carl D., was ordained and installed Aug. 8 as pastor at Marion Mennonite Church, Chambersburg, Pa.

Martin, Gary, began July 1 as interim pastor at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Sancken, Joni, began Sept. 1 as interim pastor at Germantown (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Correction: Malia Ann North Bauman's name was incorrectly listed as Malai North Bauman in the Aug. 17 issue.

Balzer, Seth Austin, Aug. 2, to Paul and Janet Roesler Balzer, Hurley, S.D.

Boller, Julia Ann, July 21, to Jeff and Carol Boller, Kalona, Iowa.

Buckwalter, Lauren Anna Jia, received for adoption Aug. 2 by Gregg and Wendy Harkcom Buckwalter, Greencastle, Pa.

Echeverri, Camille Rose, July 17, to Mark and Christine Echeverri, Pasadena, Calif.

Flaming, Kylie Danae, Aug. 16, to William "Bill" and Amy Grant Flaming, Inman, Kan.

Friesen, Keegan Anthony, June 15, to James and Andrea Wishart Friesen, Rosenfeld, Man.

Gerber, Ashlann Bayley, July 23, to Karsten and Joanna Haman Gerber, East Greenville, Pa.

Goentzel, Ian Hart, June 20, to Jarrod Goentzel and Laura VanderHart, Cambridge, Mass.

Goldberg, Levi Schirch, Aug. 7, to William Goldberg and Lisa Schirch, Harrisonburg, Va.

Gouldey, Danae Anneliese, Aug. 19, to Michael and Kalyn Gerber Gouldey, Souderton, Pa.

Horning, Dylan Miguel, May 11, 2003, received for adoption July 4 by Chad and Michelle Yoder Horning, Goshen, Ind.

Huebert, Savannah Lynn, July 28, to Jerry and Pamela Richards Huebert, Aurora, Neb.

Janecek, Ella Julianna, May 9, 2003, received for adoption July 19 by Shari Peterson Janecek.

Jordan, Kyle Steven, Aug. 10, to Randall and Jayme Moyer Jordan, Sellersville, Pa.

Knight-King, Lucy Olive, July 7, to Zach and Kelsey Knight-King, Washington, D.C.

Kraybill, Mara Joy, Aug. 12, to Galen and Deb Kraybill, Lancaster, Pa.

Kume, Macy Jade, July 19, to Eric and Adrienne Kauffman Kume, Albany, Ore.

Kurtz, Emily Elizabeth, April 1, to Kelly Bruce and Diana Lapp Kurtz, Sarasota, Fla.

Landes, Tyson Blake, July 26, to Phil and Jana Bennett Landes, Bridgewater, Va.

Miller, Gavin Paul, July 31, to LaVon and Gretchen Newcomer Miller, Shipshewana, Ind.

Miller, Jaicey Arlene, July 2, to B.J. and Jana Graber Miller, Wayland, Iowa.

Moreland, Samuel Cole Miller, Aug. 2, to Tom and Rachel Beth Miller Moreland, Lancaster, Pa.

Plank, Meleah Elizabeth Qiau, June 11, 2003, received for adoption June 29 by Galen and Sherri Hollenberg Plank, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Ramos, Benjamin Rosendo, Aug. 7, to Antonio and Gloria Keener Ramos, Chambersburg, Pa.

Regier, Bryan Jason, June 12, to Jason and Tori Gantz Regier, Hutchinson, Kan.

Reimer, Jacob David, Aug. 7, to Charles and Elizabeth Rogers Reimer, Topeka, Kan.

Rhodes, Miriam Elizabeth, June 19, to Jason and Laura Lehman Rhodes, Harrisonburg, Va.

Rinner, Maggie Kara, May 9, to Tye and Diane Stille Rinner, Wayland, Iowa.

Shingler, Anne Elise, July 27, to John and Landa Lepley Shingler, Wooster, Ohio.

Swartley, Paige Madison, July 29, to Michael and Sandy Harris Swartley, Sellersville, Pa.

Tyler, Colby Ryan, June 25, to Brent and Mary Sauder Tyler, Pioneer, Ohio.

Weaver, Katilyn Marie, July 3, to Brian and Tanya Fitzgerald Weaver, Greenville, Va.

Yoder, Norah Callista, June 28, to Greg and Sarah Yoder, Washington, Iowa.

MARRIAGES

Bontrager/Walton: Karen Bontrager, Iowa, and Zach Walton, Ohio, July 31 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio.

Brenneman/Konzelmann: Becky Brenneman, Kinzers, Pa., and Mike Konzelmann, Narvon, Pa., July 3 at Summit View Brethren in Christ Church, New Holland, Pa.

Clark/Stuckey: Ashley Clark, Elkhart, Ind., and Matt Stuckey, Somerset, Mich., May 1 at Northside Baptist, Elkhart.

Cole/Thornburg: Adam Cole, Urbana, Ohio, and Emily Thornburg, West Liberty, Ohio, July 24 at Ohio Caverns, West Liberty.

Collins/Penner: Keith Collins, Altona, Man., and Tannis Penner, Altona, July 9 in Winnipeg, Man.

Danner/Smith: Greta Danner, Buhler, Kan., and Troy Smith, Buhler, June 19 at Buhler Mennonite Church.

Derstine/Detweiler: Kara Derstine, Telford, Pa., and Anthony Detweiler, Harleysville, Pa., July 24 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Enns/Rempel: Carl Enns, Altona, Man., and Kim Rempel, Altona, Aug. 21 in Altona.

Friesen/Friesen: Bryon Friesen, Altona, Man., and Courtney Friesen, Altona, June 26.

Gillespie/Krauss: Amanda Gillespie, Lititz, Pa., and Brian Krauss, Syosset, N.Y., Aug. 1 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Gordon/McGuckin: Donald Gordon, Jr., and Jennifer McGuckin, Hartville, Ohio, July 24 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Hiebert/Hildebrand: Michael Hiebert, Altona, Man., and Jocelyn Hildebrand, Altona, July 10 at EMMC, Altona.

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Kliewer/Waltner: Jeffrey Kliewer, Omaha, Neb., and Kimberly Waltner, Freeman, S.D., Aug. 7 at Swan Lake Christian Camp, Viborg, S.D.

Martin/Stark: Nicole Martin, Harrisonburg, Va., and Zac Stark, Bradford, Pa., July 31.

McNeal/Smith: Jeffrey McNeal, Fishersville, Va., and Elizabeth Smith, Harrisonburg, Va., July 24 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

Ortman/Smoker: Sara Ortman, Moundridge, Kan., and Jason Smoker, Lancaster, Pa., July 31 at First Mennonite Church, Halstead, Kan.

Scheifele/Scrivens: Kevin Scheifele, West Liberty, Ohio, and Candice Scrivens, Elyria, Ohio, July 3 at Greensburg (Ohio) United Methodist Church.

Shuman/Troyer: Stephen Shuman, Hartville, Ohio, and Kellie Troyer, Uniontown, Ohio, Aug. 7 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

DEATHS

Augsburger, Sharon Daniel, 71, Sarasota, Fla., died July 26 of cancer. Spouse: Garnieta Brenneman Augsburger. Parents: Clarence and Estella Augsburger. Children: Darlene Ramsey, Wayne, Keith; five grandchildren. Funeral: July 29 at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Benner, Kathryn C., 81, Hatfield, Pa., died Aug. 17. Parents: Joseph M. and Ellen Cramer Benner. Funeral: Aug. 21 at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Blough, Robert, 82, Bluffton, Ohio, died July 22. Spouse: Celia M. Blough. Parents: Samuel and Ruth Horner Blough. Children: Neal, Keith, Laurie Miller; six grandchildren. Funeral: July 27 at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Deshler, Ohio.

Dirks, Katherine Dick, 93, Inman, Kan., died June 16. Spouse: Elmer Dirks (deceased). Parents: Klaas M. and Maria Franz Dick. Child: Keith; two grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 20 at Buhler (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

Dueck, Jacob F., 72, Altona, Man., died June 20. Spouse: Elsie Hiebert Dueck. Parents: Jacob S. and Sarah Deuck. Children: Gary, Ron, Brian, Jim, Joel, Tom, Pauline Friesen; 13 grandchildren. Funeral: June 24 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Eck, Viola Becker, 96, Dallas, Texas, died July 25. Spouse: Joel D. Eck (deceased). Parents: Barney and Anna Smith Becker. Children: Doris Eck Swartz, Norma Eck Koehn, Jo Ann Eck Isaac, Gloria Eck Struble, Wayne; 16 grandchildren; 43 great-grandchildren; 19 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 29 at Hesston (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

Friesen, Diedrich D., 85, Altona, Man., died July 6. Spouse: Sue Falk Friesen. Parents: Peter P. and Justina Dueck Friesen. Children: Judith Seesahai, Gloria Penner, Raymond, Bruce, Laureen Iris Crampton; 13 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 9 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Friesen, Peter S., 94, Altona, Man., died Aug. 9. Spouse: (1st) Sarah Hamm Friesen (deceased), (2nd) Neta Klippenstein Braun Friesen (deceased). Parents: Jacob J. and Elizabeth Schmidt Friesen. Children: Bernie, Esther, Menno; 11 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 13 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Gamber, Arthur, 93, Lancaster, Pa., died May 13. Spouse: Ruth Whistler Gamber. Parents: David S. and Emma Beamsderfer Gamber. Children: Joanne G. Markley, Emma Jean Fitzmaurice, Geraldine K. Charles, Darlene G. Fenstermacher, A. Dale; 10 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Burial: May 16 in Lancaster.

Goertzen, Eldon, 82, Hesston, Kan., died Aug. 7. Spouse: Susie Flaming Goertzen. Parents: Daniel and Pauline Schmidt Goertzen. Children: Brenda Buller, Stanley; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 11 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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GOSHEN
COLLEGE

Hartman, Ellen Pellman, 77, Harrisonburg, Va., died July 27. Spouse: Dwight Hartman. Parents: LeRoy and Elizabeth Lauver Pellman. Children: Jim, Jeanne Hartman Rinker, Curt; seven grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 30 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Herr, Elmer Grant, 99, Harrisonburg, Va., died Aug. 3. Spouse: Sara Graybill Herr. Parents: Elmer J. and Fannie Miller Herr. Children: Kenneth D., Lowell G.; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 13 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Kandel, Olen, 84, Fisher, Ill., died July 24. Spouse: Eunice Kandel (deceased). Parents: Abe and Amanda Kandel. Children: Rita Smith, Frank, Ernie, Jeanette Unzicker; seven grandchildren. Funeral: July 27 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher.

Kornhaus, Mary Shoup, 99, Orrville, Ohio, died July 23. Spouse: Russell Kornhaus (deceased). Parents: Henry and Sara Zigler Shoup. Children: William, James; nine grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 27 at Orrville Mennonite Church.

Kuntz, Emily, 51, Delta, Ohio, died Aug. 6. Spouse: Rod Kuntz. Parents: Malcom Peirce and Clara Thompson. Children: Lisa Miller, Ian, July Bame; three grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 14 at North Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Lehman, Earl M., Goshen, Ind., died July 2. Spouse: Phyllis Maltby Lehman. Parents: Joseph and Mollie Zehr Lehman. Children: John, Clark, Sidney, Stephen; 11 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: July 10 at The Meeting Place, Greencroft, Goshen.

Martin, Aden, 79, Elmira, Ont., died Aug. 7. Spouse: Alice Bearinger Martin (deceased). Parents: Emerson and Barbara Sauder Martin. Children: Virgil, Neil; three grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 10 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, St. Jacobs, Ont.

Martin, Luella Zehr, 79, Crohgan, N.Y., died June 28. Spouse: Alvin Martin. Parents: Christian and Martha Moser Zehr. Children: Thomas, Harry, Peter, LouAnn Martin, Sara Adams, Kay Lyndaker. Funeral: July 1 at Crohgan Mennonite Church.

Miller, Harold J., 94, Goshen, Ind., died July 31. Spouse: (1st) Ethel Norwood Miller (deceased), (2nd) Evelyn Esch Miller (deceased). Parents: John D. and Melinda Miller. Children: Margaretha Brubacher, Genevive Kehr, Eva Burroway, Daniel B.; stepchildren Elinor Surgener, Lora Miranda, Karen Patrick, Carl Esch, Thomas Esch; 27 grandchildren; 14 step-grandchildren; 41 great-grandchildren; 26 step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 3 in Goshen.

Moser, DeEtta Zehr, 68, Crohgan, N.Y., died July 3. Spouse: Lyle Moser (deceased). Parents: Harold and Edna Martin Zehr. Children: Daniel, Lyle Willard, Sheryl Martin, Juanita Van Dyke; nine grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Burial: July 7 at Crohgan Mennonite Church.

Rittenhouse, Howard S. "Jim", 87, Souderton, Pa., died June 23. Spouse: Shirley Snoke Rittenhouse. Parents: Joseph and Ella Nora Metz. Funeral: June 25 at Souderton Mennonite Homes Fellowship.

Rupp, Lucretia Sauder, 95, Archbold, Ohio, died July 27. Spouse: Lawrence Rupp (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Annie Schrock Sauder. Children: Geneva Wyse, Marlin, Mabel Ann Kauffman, Glenden, Janette Yoder; 30 grandchildren; 74 great-grandchildren; nine great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 31 at North Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Schrock, Roger V., 70, Orrville, Ohio, died June 22 of a heart attack. Spouse: Carol Schloneger Schrock. Parents: Vernon and Ada Miller Schrock. Children: Kim Mullet, Wendy Mann, Von; six grandchildren. Funeral: June 25 at Smithville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Simons, Cecil, 95, Indianapolis, died June 15. Spouse: Ruth Simons (deceased). Child: Larry G.; four grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: June 19 at G.H. Hermann Greenwood Funeral Home, Indianapolis.

Stuckey, Gary, 56, West Unity, Ohio, died Aug. 7 from burns received during a farming accident. Spouse: Marlene Gerig Stuckey. Parents: Loren and Rutheda Grieser Stuckey. Children: Timothy Lee, Chris Allen, Ryan Gary, Amy Lynne Stevens; four grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 12 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Unruh, Lena Wiens, 101, Moses Lake, Wa., died July 24. Spouse: Edwin Unruh (deceased). Parents: Abraham and Mary Brown Wiens. Children: John, Lois Reimer; 10 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 31 at Memorial Chapel Hillsboro, Kan.

Wyatt, O. Earl, 85, Albany, Ore., died Aug. 13. Spouse: Pauline Widmer Wyatt. Parents: James and Hester Duncan Wyatt. Children: Marcine Jackson, Miriam Rasmussen; two grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 18 at Albany Mennonite Church.

Zimmerman, Titus N., 79, Ephrata, Pa., died July 28. Spouse: Ursula B. Denlinger Zimmerman. Parents: Mahlon and Esther Nolt Zimmerman. Children: Robert, Mark, Roy, Clair, Marie Miller, Sharon Good; 28 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 2 at Ephrata Mennonite Church.

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Vice president of health services. Hillcrest, is a 400-resident CCRC and Church of the Brethren facility in La Verne, Calif. Hillcrest seeks ***vice president*** (assisted living, Alzheimer, skilled nursing and residential living). Candidate must have excellent communication skills, leadership abilities and collaborative abilities. NHA required. RCFE preferred. Resumés accepted until Sept. 17. Contact Ralph McFadden; email Rmcfadden_abc@brethren.org; fax 847-742-5160.

Rosedale Bible College is seeking applicants for the position of ***president***. The ideal candidate will have a high view of Scripture, an advanced degree, administrative experience, a clear vision for the school and strong communication and public relations gifts, and must be fully supportive of the theological positions of Conservative Mennonite Conference. The position will be available July 1, 2005. Send resumé to Levi Sommers, 2950-B Central Ave., Canon City, CO 81212, or email lsommers@citystar.com.

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) is seeking an ***executive coordinator*** to lead in the implementation of "Partnership Africa," AIMM's renewed vision for an international and inter-Mennonite mission venture in and from Africa. While responsibility for actual program decision-making is being shifted to Partnership Councils operating in the country of mission activity, certain networking and facilitating responsibilities will be required centrally. Hence AIMM will maintain an International Central Council (ICC) with a small central office staff.

The executive coordinator will work on behalf of and be accountable to the AIMM ICC. The actual full-time equivalent (FTE) of the position is negotiable. It will, however, be the responsibility of the executive coordinator to ensure that all the necessary functions of the central office are professionally attended to, either by the executive coordinator or other staff. A list of these central office functions is available on request.

The successful candidate for this position should have the following qualifications: (1) an Anabaptist/Mennonite approach to Christian faith and mission, (2) experience and knowledge of mission in Africa, (3) fluency in English and French, (4) ability to build and coordinate a new organization.

Currently the AIMM administrative office is located in Goshen, Ind., but the executive coordinator may be located elsewhere in North America or in Africa. The position may begin as early as Jan. 1, 2005, or as late as July 1, 2005. Salary, benefits and FTE negotiable. Applications should be received by Sept. 15. Letters of application or other inquiries should be sent to Dave Dyck, Transition Coordinator, 660 Bardal Bay, Winnipeg, MB R2G 0J2; email dmdyck1@mts.net; phone 204-663-4342.

Youth are sweet. Jesus is sweeter, yo! If you agree, consider coming to love and lead our youth at **Gingrichs Mennonite Church,** Lebanon, Pa. For information on a position as full-time ***youth director***, contact Cathy Boshart 717-272-8723 or rsbosh@mbcomp.com.

Franconia Mennonite Church, located in Franconia, Pa., is seeking a talented, energetic individual to fill the position of ***music director*** and lead a congregation of over 735 members in our music ministry. This very important role will give leadership to all music areas within the church, including adult and children choirs, music planning for worship services and congregational singing. For more information or to request a detailed job description, please contact Keith Berger at 215-723-3320. Resumés may be sent to kberger@franconiamennonite.org.

Provident Bookstores is looking for a full-time ***assistant manager*** to work at our Goshen bookstore. Experience in supervision and desire to provide excellent customer service required.

Send resumé to PBS Human Resources, 1625 Lititz Pike, Lancaster, PA 17601; email pbslanc@mph.org.

Adriel, a Mennonite children's agency, seeks a full-time ***campus pastor***. Responsibilities include spiritual guidance for youth and staff, coordination of summer program and relating to broader church. Bachelor's degree in social services, education or ministry required with seminary degree/degree in youth ministry preferred. Contact Karla Gingerich at 937-465-0010 ext. 137, or kgingerich@adriel.org. EOE.

Clinton Frame Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., a 500+ member church is seeking a ***youth/associate pastor.*** Our junior youth and MYF have an enrollment of 80 plus. Applicants should be on fire for Christ with personal devotional time daily, love for serving and mission, Anabaptist belief, team player, good teacher, prefer a bachelor's degree and possibly some seminary education and experience working with youth. Our desire is to have this position filled by someone who is following God's calling toward youth pastor as a long-term ministry. If your gifts fit our needs, please contact Bob Yoder at IN-MI Mennonite Conference, 800-288-8486 or email bob@im.mennonite.net.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.15 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available.

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Conrad Grebel University College

Conrad Grebel University College

ACADEMIC DEAN

Conrad Grebel University College, a Mennonite college on the campus of the University of Waterloo, is seeking a dynamic and energetic person to serve as **Academic Dean** beginning **July 1, 2005**. The Academic Dean is the chief academic officer of the College and a member of the administrative leadership team.

Conrad Grebel is the residential and teaching college of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. Its undergraduate academic program is fully integrated with the University of Waterloo and includes departments of Music and Peace and Conflict Studies as well as courses in Religious Studies, History, English, Sociology, Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Arts. The College also offers a graduate program in Theological Studies and is affiliated with the Toronto School of Theology.

Preference will be given to candidates who have established themselves as excellent teachers and scholars, have experience in academic leadership and administration, stand within the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition and are Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada.

For more information, please contact the President's Office at cgcpres@uwaterloo.ca. Applications or nominations, to be received by *October 18, 2004*, should be addressed to:

Dr. Henry Paetkau, President
Conrad Grebel University College
Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6

NEEDED IN 2005:
MCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This person will lead Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and build understanding and support for its mission among an increasingly diverse constituency.

For a job description or application, please contact search committee chair Donella Clemens, PO Box 64439, Souderton, PA 18964; dmclemens@mindspring.com.

Application review begins Sept. 1, 2004, with a January 2005 appointment and a June 2005 start date.

In 2004, MCC budget was $63 million U.S., with 1,200 people serving in more than 50 countries.

Francis of Assisi: Performing the Gospel Life by Lawrence S. Cunningham (Eerdmans, 2004, $14) argues that Francis was a devotedly orthodox Catholic whose life must be understood as a response to reforming elements abroad in the church of his day.

The Lord Is My Shepherd: Psalms to Accompany Us on Our Journey Through Aging by Albert Michael Lewis (Eerdmans, 2004, $15) reflects on Psalm 23, Psalm 98 and Psalm 121 and relates them to a journey through aging.

To an Angel Who Is New by Arno Bohlmeijer (Eerdmans, 2004, $15) consists of writings by the author to his wife, Marian, who was in a coma and later died after they and their two young daughters were in a bad car accident.

Sacred Rhythms: Finding a Peaceful Pace in a Hectic World by Christine Sine (Baker Book House, 2004, $12.99) describes how our lives can reflect God's rhythms of peace, celebration and rest instead of the world's stressful, hurried pace.

Lord, Show Me Your Glory: 52 Weekly Meditations on the Majesty of God by Ethel Herr (Christian Publications, 2004, $14.99) is available from the author at ethel@herr.cc, www. ethelherr.com.

Building on the Gospel Foundation: The Mennonites of Franklin County, Pennsylvania, and Washington County, Maryland, 1730-1970 by Edsel Burdge Jr. and Samuel L. Horst (Herald Press, 2004, $49.99) tells the stories of three centuries of faith and life among the Washington County (Md.) and Franklin County (Pa.) Mennonites.

Us & Them: Bridging the Chasm of Faith by W.C. Scheurer (Interfaith Journey, 2004, $8) consists of 20 brief essays on such topics as humility, conscience, compassion, idolatry and skepticism.

The Way of Jesus, edited by Tony D'Souza (Eerdmans, 2004, $12), is a modernization of an anonymous mystical masterpiece discovered in 1516 and first published by Martin Luther. It consists of 54 short, pithy chapters.

Hafiz: The Mystic Poets and **Tagore: The Mystic Poets** (SkyLight Paths, 2004, $16.99 each) introduces poetry fans and spiritual seekers to classic mystic poets. Each book in the series includes a brief introduction to the poet's time and place, a summary of the poet's major themes, essential selections from the poet's works and a preface by a contemporary spiritual writer. Hafiz was a Sufi master from Persia who died in 1389. Rabindranath Tagore was a poet, playwright, painter and educator from the Indian subcontinent who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913.

Fasting by Carole Garibaldi Rogers (Sorin Books, 2004, $12.95) and **Pilgrimage** by Edward C. Sellner (Sorin Books, 2004, $12.95) are two new books in the series Exploring a Great Spiritual Practice, which combines easily understood practice tools with comprehensive, credible information about the origin, theory and contemporary relevance of the practice.

What Do You Know About Hunger? (Church World Service, 2004) is a 24-page booklet with simulations, skits, bulletin inserts and worship materials that congregations can use to lift up the issue of hunger. Up to 10 copies are free. Order from CWS, P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515; 800-297-1516.

Katya by Sandra Birdsell (Milkweed Editions, 2004, $24) is a novel published earlier in Canada with the title **The Russlander.** It tells the story of the Russian Revolution through the eyes of a young Mennonite girl.

Our People: The Amish and Mennonites of Ohio by Levi Miller (Herald Press, 2004, $7.99) is the third edition of this book, which includes photos by Doyle Yoder.

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CANADIAN Mennonite

MANAGING EDITOR

Canadian Mennonite is seeking a Managing Editor. This full-time position begins Jan. 1, 2005 and is based in Waterloo, Ontario. A resumé and two news-writing samples should be submitted by Oct. 22, 2004.

The person filling this position will have the responsibility of editing and producing each issue. Duties include working with the Editor on story ideas and soliciting contributions, overseeing layouts, and proof reading. The Managing Editor also will do some reporting and writing.

Applicants should have: a passion for the church and for Canadian Mennonite's mission; excellent communication and listening skills; the ability to manage multiple tasks and details, and flexibility and creativity under pressure.

Direct inquiries and applications to:
Timothy Dyck, Editor and Publisher,
Canadian Mennonite
490 Dutton Dr., Unit C5, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7
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Everett J. Thomas

Picking presidents

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.—Matthew 6:21

Two Mennonite colleges are in presidential search processes. Mennonite Education Agency, the umbrella organization for schools within Mennonite Church USA, is partnering with both Hesston (Kan.) College and Goshen (Ind.) College in their searches.

Hesston and Goshen are making seminal choices. Both colleges must choose new presidents that will bring their campuses and faculties even closer to Mennonite Church USA. We need our colleges to provide fresh generations of leadership for our fledgling denomination as we work at being a missional church (see page 8).

"The selection of a president is one of the most important decisions [for a college] because it has a tremendous impact on the ethos and life and future of the institution," says MEA executive director Carlos Romero.

Leading a church college today is a daunting task. There are many constituent groups—including equally articulate faculties, alumni, parents and donors—that expect the institution to move in the direction they want. So complex has become the task of leading colleges—especially four-year, liberal arts colleges—that higher education leadership has become an academic discipline in itself. So search committees may place a high value on candidates who already have training in this emerging academic speciality. But specialization in this or a related field does not necessarily mean a strong commitment to Mennonite Church USA.

Colleges must choose presidents who will bring their campuses even closer to Mennonite Church USA.

The next presidents of Hesston and Goshen face incredible pressure to value things other than the denomination that created them. Most common is the temptation toward academic elitism. However, when a campus yields to this temptation and such a value becomes the treasure toward which its heart is inclined, the church loses. Furthermore, it is usually a dead-end for the college: After instilling this elitism into its students, alumni pass it along to their children, who then want to "move up" to a more prestigious school. Mennonite Church USA is then no longer the treasure toward which the next generation of students inclines their hearts.

Another temptation is to focus on the geographic region—and an attractive non-Mennonite market—in which the school is located. A campus culture that resonates with the values and worldview of its region can be a powerful form of missional education. But if the campus culture becomes too assimilated and the percentage of Mennonite students drops to marginal levels, the college runs the risk of being more an expression of its locale than an expression of Mennonite Church USA. Alumni may be loyal to the school and send their children there but not because they have a heart for our church.

On June 1, we published a news release from Mennonite Education Agency that showed the growth or decline of student populations in each level of Mennonite schooling ("Mennonite Schools See Combined Gain"). All sectors grew except our colleges. MEA provided no analysis of this difference, but I contend it is happening because Mennonite elementary schools, high schools and seminaries have remained closer to the church than have most of our Mennonite colleges.

Drawing closer to the church is the critical issue facing the search committees at Goshen and Hesston. At the end of each new president's tenure, each institution will be either closer to Mennonite Church USA or further away. Fortunately, both colleges have been on trajectories bringing them closer to being "church-owned," with accountability to the denomination rather than ambiguously "church-affiliated" and at arms length from the church. It is critical for Mennonite Church USA that both colleges remain on this path.

The search committees and Mennonite Education Agency have a challenging task before them as they discern the best leaders for Goshen and Hesston. Both institutions belong to the church. But both will remain church-owned only if Mennonite Church USA is the great treasure buried deep in the hearts of the new presidents and the campus culture that emerges.—*ejt*

Note: We received news about the presidential candidate at Hesston (Kan.) College as this issue was going to press. See page 19.

The Mennonite

www.TheMennonite.org

September 21, 2004

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Grace, loving-kindness and secrets

Elaine Bryant is pastor of Englewood Mennonite Church in Chicago.

As a freshman in high school she had secretly been unable to embrace the concept of a virgin birth. That was months after she had "joined church" and been baptized.

It could be said that her doubts were forced into secrecy by her desire not to be thought of as a "heathen." That was the term that had been used by the one with whom she had ignorantly—and somewhat arrogantly—discussed her doubts. "We're not going to have any heathens around here," the potential confidant had said with great firmness. Later, however, she read and heard some teaching that the Hebrew word for virgin could be taken to just mean a young woman—and not necessarily a virgin. This served to continue her questioning of the virgin birth teaching.

That questioning did not, however, diminish the belief that the teachings of Jesus and his accompanying actions were valid, worth following and the only way for humankind to be right with God. The secrecy continued because she believed and feared that others, who believed so strongly in the virgin birth idea, would no longer view her as she wanted to be viewed. The secret with the accompanying fear was an ever-present source of dis-ease and inner tension.

We should be as gracious and loving toward those who say they have received Jesus as Lord and Savior as God has been gracious to us and our secrets.

Her secret violated a strong desire to operate with honesty and integrity. The fear proved what 1 John 4:18 says about fear and torment: "There is no fear in love, but perfect [i.e., mature or the God kind of] love casts out fear, because fear involves torment" (NKJV).

As you may have gathered, the secret holder is this writer. Fortunately God, as described by Jonah, is "gracious and merciful … slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness" (Jonah 4:2) and extended his amazing grace and loving-kindness to me by way of a question, while I waited at a stoplight on a busy south side Chicago street.

"Elaine, if you believe that God created the heavens and the earth and all that is, why couldn't he cause a virgin to conceive a child?" Whether that question was a form of inspired self-talk or the voice of the Spirit of Truth—sent from God by and because of the Lord Jesus—I cannot say. I can say that dis-ease and tension or torment about the virgin birth left.

One recent morning I thought about sharing the account of my struggle as a way to encourage myself and others in the church not to worry about those who hold beliefs that differ from ours. Rather than being harsh and engaging in accusatory labeling, name-calling and presumptions about knowing another person's relationship to God, we should be as gracious and loving toward those who say they have received Jesus as Lord and Savior as God has been gracious to us and our secrets.

While we see what's manifested, only God knows the heart. The heart and mind may truly be "after" God and God's Son but be confused, deceived or weak. According to the Lord's explanation in Matthew 13:37-41 about the wheat and the tares, we are instructed against taking actions that uproot those who have been planted by God. The Lord is more than able to save from secret and open sin. He has done and is yet doing it for me. I wonder if he has done it for you as well.

I wonder how it would be if, when we are sure someone else is wrong, we prayed that God would help them and us truly see as God sees.

TheMennonite

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—*Editors*

What do Mennonites believe?

Re J. Nelson Kraybill's "A Christian Pledge of Allegiance" (Aug. 3): What do Mennonites believe and when did we first believe about separation of church and state? It could be argued that it goes back to 1 Samuel 8, when the children of Israel entered politics by insisting on a king.

This nationalistic commitment persisted through Israel's history, eventually corrupting even their expectations of the Messiah. Jesus arrived a king on a donkey, as he admitted to Pilate, but he was not a nationalist. His was a heavenly kingdom: "Else would my servants fight," he said. He then turned the administration of his new kingdom over to committed followers who were instrumental in phenomenal church growth—in spite of severe persecution—for the next 300 years and until emperor Constantine reimposed national politics on the church by making Christianity the official state religion. It was another 1,200 years before the Anabaptists became martyrs by insisting on separating church and state.

In the meantime, the church shifted its basis for unity, from the Spirit and faith to national interests, which ultimately resulted in the great church division between the East and West. The vitality of the church became so weakened it provided fertile soil for the rise and spread of Islam and the Crusades.

It is not likely that the early Anabaptists were aware of their important role in history when insisting on the separation of church and state. They were simply faithful to the Scriptures as they saw them. They insisted that the church should take its cue from Jesus' definition of his kingdom and were willing to die for it. It was another 290 years before the United States became the first nation in history to declare the separation of church and state.
—D. Lowell Nissley, Sarasota, Fla.

IN THIS ISSUE

Iglesia Luz del Evangelico in Dallas, Texas, is featured this quarter in our new series spotlighting Mennonite Church USA congregations (pages 16-17). We continue to look for photographers who can provide similar photo spreads of other Mennonite Church USA congregations. Such photographs usually depict a vibrant worship life, and worship is the theme of two other articles in this issue. Richard L. Bowman asks that "we design our worship experiences … to be open and inviting to people from different cultural backgrounds, religious preparations and life experiences" (page 12). Thomas Finger's article digs deep into the assumptions many of us carry about religious rituals in worship life and says that by understanding sacramentality we can "connect our practical orientation with worship" and "relate more meaningfully to churches that stress sacraments" (page 11).—*Editors*

Mennonite retirement

I was delighted to see the Aug. 17 issue that featured six Mennonite-affiliated retirement communities ("A Fabric of Service"). Melanie Zuercher captured the spirit and commitment of these ministries. Their stories can be heard over and over among the 70 Mennonite, Mennonite Brethren and Brethren in Christ organizations that make up Mennonite Health Services Alliance. In addition to senior service providers, members include behavioral/mental health services, hospitals and programs for those with developmental disabilities.

Most MHS Alliance members are facing serious challenges, and they recognize the need for strong relationships with each other and with the church community. As state and federal funds are squeezed, expenses such as employee salaries and benefits keep growing. It is increasingly difficult to provide services to people who are unable to pay the full cost. In the face of these challenges, MHS Alliance members need a strong connection with the church, to work with congregations in meeting the needs of their members and neighbors. I urge readers to learn about and pray for the health and human service ministries in your communities.
—Rick Stiffney, President/CEO, Mennonite Health Services Alliance

Congratulations for noting that the word retirement is hardly for us as Anabaptists, and especially not with its military origin under Bismarck. Everett J. Thomas indicated in the editorial that we are (at least some of us) "unretired disciples." In fact, the term "disciples" doesn't quite fit with the word retirement, does it? The Aug. 17 issue also noted that these communities are becoming "a fabric of service." Congratulations to those, such as John Driver, who have brought us thus far with the better word "shalom." Driver says that "it meant well-being, health and salvation in its fullest sense, both material and spiritual." It suggests engagement in opposition to retirement—which suggests disengagement. But this shalom engagement is ours to the end, even beyond life. Indeed shalom is for all ages, and perhaps some of these Mennonite retirement communities should be more purposely for all ages.—*Milo D. Stahl, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Re Dennis LeFevre's "How to Finance Your Retirement" (Aug. 17): Is there not a major conflict of interest when financial planners or "counselors" are also selling insurance?

If I had all the money I paid over my lifetime in insurance premiums, minus my few claims, I'd have a neat retirement kitty. But I don't. So is buying more insurance sound financial planning?
—Maynard Shirk, Conestoga, Pa.

As one who grew up in a retirement community, it was fun to see the issue of *The Mennonite* dedicated to preparing for and living in retirement (Aug. 17). But I was uncomfortable with the inference in Everett J. Thomas' editorial that voluntary service is something everyone ought to do a "stint" of at some point in life. It would have been entirely consistent with the rest of the issue to point out that service is a natural expression of life as a Christian and that the service these seniors are engaged in is reflective of a commitment to Christ that most likely has been visible from youth to young adulthood to middle age to retirement.

We all have discretionary time, and I applaud seniors using theirs to serve others. I also hope that we can encourage a culture that anticipates Christians of all ages using their discretionary time to serve others in the name of Jesus.—*Del Hershberger, director of Christian service programs, Mennonite Mission Network*

Pray for our leaders

We believe in praying not only for our president but for all those in public office with their varied tasks, duties and obligations. The Bible enjoins us to do so. There is a tremendous weight of responsibility on our leaders' shoulders. For them to attempt to fulfill all the expectations of their offices in their own power without divine guidance is a mistake, whether they recognize that fact or not. So let's pray, brothers and sisters. Pray for each other. Pray for our leaders. Pray that God's kingdom may come. When that happens, evil men will receive their due reward. Give thanks to God for the hope of eternal life that we have as believers in Jesus. —*Gene and Ruby Weaver, Apex, N.C.*

It seems easy to assume that if just so and so were elected that would make everything right. Don't we all know that is a fantasy? I try to pray for everyone on all sides. I am probably going to have to live with people from all sides. So I try to pray for all of them. Even the worst ones can turn around just like Paul did. And the best of us can make gross mistakes, as David did. The most important thing we can do is pray, knowing that God reigns.—*Jim Fitz, Tiskilwa, Ill.*

Holy habits

Thank you for a wonderful magazine. I was especially nurtured by "Holy Habits," Gordon Houser's editorial (Aug. 3). I am Catholic, but the acetic life in the Catholic Church is for those called to the religious life in Holy Orders, or the Sisterhood. I have a call in my heart to follow a different path as far as lifestyle is concerned. I am a wife and mother. Houser's editorial was very important to me. I have several precious friends who are Mennonite.—*Mary Ann Templeton, Castalia, Ohio*

Countercultural worship

Re Myron Schrag's Aug. 17 Readers Say letter: Schrag seems to put cultural relevance and a faithful proclamation of a transcendent God at odds with each other. That didn't seem like the message of "Countercultural Worship" (July 20). We need to be faithful in our proclamation of God and the countercultural message of following Christ. At the same time, we have to make that proclamation in a way people can hear (context). The best news, misunderstood, is no good. The ultimate example of context or cultural relevance is the incarnation of Christ. Why is it wrong for our churches to follow the same example?

God's people should not judge the motives of churches who choose to do things differently. It is hard to imagine a worship leader in any context saying that they care more about entertaining audiences than inspiring people to walk with God. It is sad to imply that people are unfaithful when they seek to proclaim the gospel using culturally relevant methods. The point of the article was to give us freedom from the worship wars of a consumer mindset by helping us focus on the countercultural message of the gospel, not to add fuel to the fire. —*Michael Danner, Metamora, Ill.*

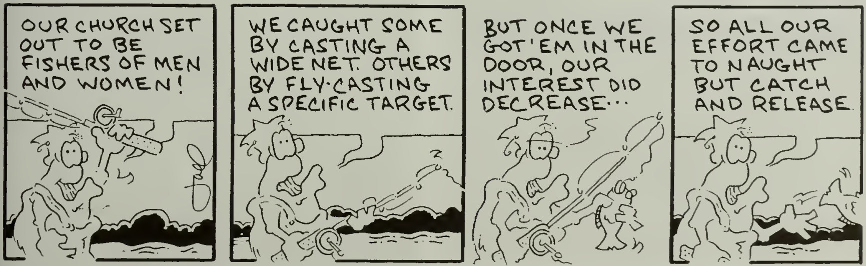
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

The reality TV show "Amish in the City"

- ○ exploits the Amish (19%)
- ○ demonstrates positives within Amish culture (18%)
- ○ Neither (6%)
- ○ Haven't watched it (57%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


OUR CHURCH SET OUT TO BE FISHERS OF MEN AND WOMEN!
WE CAUGHT SOME BY CASTING A WIDE NET. OTHERS BY FLY-CASTING A SPECIFIC TARGET.
BUT ONCE WE GOT 'EM IN THE DOOR, OUR INTEREST DID DECREASE...
SO ALL OUR EFFORT CAME TO NAUGHT BUT CATCH AND RELEASE.

IN BRIEF

Sept. 21 is Day of Prayer for Peace

In the framework of its Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace (2001-2010), the World Council of Churches has called on its member churches to pray for peace on Sept. 21 or on the Sundays preceding or following that day. This WCC initiative links to the International Day of Peace declared by the United Nations General Assembly, a worldwide effort intended as a day of global cease-fire and nonviolence and as an opportunity for education and raising public awareness.—*WCC News*

MEA fund welcomes proposals

Mennonite Education Agency invites proposals for grants from its Fund for Peoplehood Education, a donor-restricted term endowment. The fund supports initiatives that promote the distinctive features of church-sponsored education and encourage strong ties between Mennonite Church USA and its schools. Priority is given to projects that strengthen church-school ties and interpret the distinctive features of Mennonite education. Deadline is Sept. 30. Contact MEA, 63846 County Road 35 Suite 1, Goshen, IN 46528-9621; info@MennoniteEducation.org; 574-642-3164.—*Mennonite Church USA News Service*

CMU professor offers course on film and faith

WINNIPEG—Gordon Matties, a professor at Canadian Mennonite University, believes going to a movie can be a lot like going to church.

"A church gathers to hear the stories that both reflect and shape its life," he says. "There's no other place, besides church and cinema, where that happens."

To explore how films can shed light on the spiritual issues of life, he has joined Cinematheque, an independent movie theater in Winnipeg, to offer "Seeing Is Believing: Conversations between Film and Faith," a continuing education course through Canadian Mennonite University.

The course promises fodder for discussion for those who enjoy viewing and discussing movies. The format will be a series of Sunday matinee screenings, followed by a light dinner, during which Matties invites conversation about the role of film in visualizing the spiritual and social challenges of our time.—*CMU News Service*

Smiling through the chicken pox

Annette Castillo maintains a smile even during a chickenpox epidemic at La Casa Grande, an orphanage she directs with her husband in Benin. The white kaolin powder, a traditional remedy, helps dry the pustules and reduce itching. Castillo and her husband, Francisco (Paco), created a home for abandoned children in 2000. Today, more than 20 children thrive in La Casa Grande's caring environment.

The Radicals available in DVD and Spanish

GOSHEN, Ind.—A new DVD that dramatizes the origins of the Anabaptist movement in Europe in the early 1500s is now available with a Spanish and a Portuguese soundtrack. The film was produced in English 15 years ago.

The Radicals, a theatrical film that won an American Golden Eagle award in 1990, tells the story of early Anabaptists Michael and Margaretha Sattler. It was inspired by Myron Augsburger's novel *Pilgrim Aflame*, which focuses on the critical issue of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, according to Augsburger.

Michael Sattler was an author of the Schleitheim Confession, an agreement that catalyzed many separate groups of Anabaptists. The clarity, strength and courage of his witness is evident in scenes portraying his trial and execution.

The DVD also includes a condensed version of the story, suitable for younger children, and other teaching aids, in English only. Soundtracks for the film in French and German are being considered.

The Radicals was produced in 1989 in Europe by Sisters & Brothers, Mennonite filmmakers committed to exploring issues of faith through the media. The executive producer team included Jim L. Bowman, J. Ron Byler, D. Michael Hostetler and Joel Kauffmann, all of whom are still involved in communications in the church. Tim Bowman authored the new DVD.

The DVD is available from the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee (www.mcusa-archives.org).—*J. Ron Byler for Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Jodi H. Beyeler

Coffee bar on campus

Marianne Stegmann, a Goshen (Ind.) College sophomore nursing major, brews a cup of coffee in the newly completed coffee bar, a partnership between the student life and business departments offering students the opportunity to become entrepreneurs for credit and manage the shop. It is located in the new connector structure that houses floor lounges, study rooms, a laundry room, kitchens and a game area.

African Historic Peace Churches meet in Kenya

NAIROBI, Kenya—Delegates gathered Aug. 8-13 in Nairobi for the first conference of African Historic Peace Churches. Mennonites and Brethren in Christ came from Congo, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe, while Quakers came from Kenya, Rwanda, Congo and Burundi, and Church of the Brethren came from Nigeria.

These churches all face tough questions: What does it mean to be a peace church in the midst of violent civil conflict? Does the Historic Peace Church identity, birthed in other places and times, have anything to contribute?

The peace church identity has not been central to many African churches, so reinterpreting the theological language of this tradition provoked much discussion.

African brothers and sisters struggle with how to respond to the violence they face. Many reports indicated that a new chapter to a Historic Peace Church identity is being forged.

Delegates from the three denominations held separate discussions on what new work might come from this conference and drafted a letter to share with other Christian churches to enlarge the process of peacemaking in Africa.—*from a report by Robert Herr and Judy Zimmerman Herr for Mennonite World Conference*

MU hosts Fulbright scholars from 11 countries

stern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., has won a com-
tition among U.S. universities to host the Fulbright Conflict
solution Program through 2008. In a Sept. 3 ceremony to cele-
ate the award, EMU president Loren E. Swartzendruber (right)
lcomes 14 Fulbright scholarship recipients to EMU's master's
ogram in peace studies. The students represent 11 countries:
rocco, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, the Democratic Republic of
ngo, Indonesia, Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda, Pakistan and Syria.

thel breaks ground for new sports complex

Bethel College (North Newton, Kan.) president E. LaVerne Epp, left, and students break ground for the new Bethel sports complex at a ceremony on Sept. 6. The students closest to Epp are David Stuckey, a senior from Moundridge, Kan., representing the Student Alumni Association, and Daniel Regier, a senior from Newton, Kan., representing the Student Senate.

YES teams commissioned for training, service

NEW HOLLAND, Pa.—Brent Leichty, a pastor from Bourbon, Ind., asked, "Does the gospel really work, or are we just playing games?" as he addressed more than 600 friends and family members who gathered Aug. 22 at Petra Christian Fellowship to commission 32 new Youth Evangelism Service participants, including Leichty's own son Josh.

The group also commissioned six new staff members for service at the Harrisburg (Pa.) Discipleship Center, where the participants will receive three months of discipleship training before leaving for cross-cultural service and outreach in Germany, India, Peru, Honduras, Central Asia and the Himalayas.

"Without the cross, the gospel has no power," Leichty said. "The cross means inconvenience, suffering, shame, loss of reputation. God is not saying you have to love the cross, but you must take it up if you want to see his kingdom come."—*Eastern Mennonite Missions News Service*

AIDS education reaches students in India

AKRON, Pa.—In India, HIV/AIDS affects some 5 million people, and awareness of the disease in the rural state of Jharkhand has been low. The Mennonite Central Committee-supported Milan Project seeks to change that through visits to school classes, as well as through community fairs and other events.

Students talk to their friends and families about what they have learned. At a girls' school in Daltonganj, 14-year-old Anamika Singh said Milan's presentation gave her the courage to tell a hospitalized neighbor to insist that hospital staff use new syringes. Singh had heard of HIV/AIDS through magazines and television, but Milan provided details she had not known.

For more about Milan's work in Jharkhand, see the September/October issue of MCC's free magazine, *A Common Place*.—*MCC News Service*

IN BRIEF

Paul D. Leichty is first Disabilities Network director

The Anabaptist Disabilities Network (ADNet) has hired Paul D. Leichty of Goshen, Ind., to serve as its first director, beginning Sept. 1. The ADNet Board appointed Leichty at its meeting July 27-28 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa. He will work half-time out of the College Mennonite Church Peace Center office on the campus of Goshen College. —*ADNet*

Americans living in poverty increase in 2003

The number of Americans living in poverty rose by 1.3 million last year. Figures released Aug. 26 by the U.S. Census Bureau showed 35.8 Americans, or 12.5 percent of the population, living below the poverty line. The number is up from 34.5 million in 2002 —Associated Press

Traffic jams

In the 85 largest U.S. cities, snarled traffic is costing travelers 3.5 billion hours per year, up from 700 million two decades ago, a new report says.—Associated Press

Are Mennonites

The answer may surprise you.

by Thomas Finger

To the question in the title most Mennonites, past and present, would probably answer no. Mennonites often suppose the word "sacrament" refers exclusively to church rituals, such as the Lord's Supper and baptism. Many Mennonites assume that people who call these rituals sacraments believe these ceremonies—or their elements (such as bread, wine, water)—directly impart divine grace. In other words, people who emphasize sacraments, we tend to think, believe they receive grace simply by participating in such rituals, even if they do so passively.

Mennonites, however, believe that God's grace does not become active in our lives unless we respond to it in some way and seek to live as Jesus taught. Accordingly, if "sacrament" indicates what we often assume it does, Mennonites are not sacramental.

Properly understood, however, the meaning of this word is much broader. A sacrament is a visible, physical sign of an invisible, spiritual grace. All creatures—plants, animals and the rest—can reflect their Creator's goodness in some way. Any created being, then, can be or become a sacrament in this broader sense. Any activity involving our bodies, especially those acts that Jesus commanded, can also be or become sacramental. In this sense, Mennonites have always been supremely sacramental. For we have insisted that God's grace must be embodied, must become actual and concrete, in all aspects of daily life.

Does this mean Mennonites might use sacramental language but, unlike many other churches, not apply it to religious rituals? Let's turn to our Anabaptist ancestors, who lived during the Protestant Reformation (about 1525-1575), for some clues.

Any activity involving our bodies, especially those acts that Jesus commanded, can also be or become sacramental. In this sense, Mennonites have always been supremely sacramental.

sacramental?

Continued from page 9

Spiritualists: During the Reformation, the Anabaptists had much in common with people called Spiritualists. Spiritualists rejected many of the Catholic and Protestant practices which Anabaptists rejected. Like Anabaptists, they emphasized Jesus' teachings. But Spiritualists believed that visible, physical ceremonies were not essential to Christian faith. When they gathered, they did not practice them. For many Spiritualists, however, church rituals meant so little that it did not matter whether one participated in them or not. For this reason, they could occasionally take Communion in Protestant or Catholic churches. In this way they could retain nominal membership in established churches and avoid persecution.

Anabaptists, on the contrary, insisted on water baptism at the risk of their lives. They taught that no community could be a true church unless it practiced a proper baptism and Lord's Supper. These visible, physical rituals held enormous importance for them. Why?

Mainly because baptism and the Lord's Supper, for Anabaptists, did not belong to a distinct religious sphere, separate from daily life. Instead, these rituals powerfully expressed and strengthened them for actions that were at the heart of everyday Christian living. When Anabaptists celebrated the Lord's Supper, they did not simply remember Jesus' death in the distant past. When they recalled how Jesus had given his body and blood—his life and his very self—for them, they pledged to give themselves—their time, possessions, their own body and blood if need be—for each other. These were not empty sentiments. Many Anabaptists sacrificed their lives in this way.

All early Anabaptists practiced not only the Lord's Supper and baptism but also economic sharing and mutual discipling, which they called discipline.

All early Anabaptists practiced not only the Lord's Supper and baptism but also economic sharing and mutual discipling, which they called discipline. In many places, money and other possessions were collected before the Supper and afterward distributed to those who had need. Discipline, which included the settling of disagreements and confessions of sins against each other, often preceded the Supper. Some Anabaptists also practiced footwashing, which vividly expressed their servant-like commitment to each other, at the Supper. In such ways, the Lord's Supper was interwoven with daily, communal discipleship. It was hardly an insignificant, optional religious performance.

The Anabaptists, however, did reject many "sacramental" notions as they understood them. They denied, for instance, that the Communion bread was literally Jesus' physical body or that it automatically conveyed grace. Nevertheless, they often experienced the Risen Jesus' spiritual presence among them through these communal and material channels.

Baptism: Like the Lord's Supper, baptism symbolized realities at the heart of Christian life and strengthened the community to live them out. The Spiritualists claimed that inner, spiritual conversion alone was important and did not need to be completed by outer, physical baptism. Anabaptists rejected this. They also rejected infant baptism because they thought it made the opposite mistake. Anabaptists viewed infant baptism, which Protestants and Catholics practiced, as simply an outward, physical ceremony, since it was not accompanied by inward, spiritual conversion.

Only believer's baptism, where converts testified to the Spirit's work, truly joined that inner reality to the outer ceremony. Although some Anabaptists avoided the word sacrament, they were actually claiming that believer's baptism alone was fully sacramental, in the proper sense of the word.

In believer's baptism, those being baptized committed themselves to the community, while the community pledged to nurture them. In this way, baptism provided the basis for the community to call its members to account for their behavior and for members to call on the community for support. Through baptism people began to be discipled by others and to participate in discipling others.

Baptism, in other words, provided the foundation for discipling, or discipline, a basic feature of daily Christian life. At every baptism, as community members committed themselves to new people, their own baptismal commitments to each other and to God were recalled and renewed. In all the ways just mentioned, baptism and the Lord's Supper intertwined the sacramentality of everyday life. We could call these rituals sacraments, in the proper sense.

What does this mean for Mennonites today? A deeper appreciation of sacramentality might help us connect our practical, ethical orientation with our worship. The basic notion of discovering and expressing God's invisible, spiritual grace in all our visible, physical activities and surroundings is very Mennonite. If we think of this as sacramental, we are more likely to ask what it means for worship.

An increased awareness of sacramental traditions should lead us into deeper exploration of Scripture and our own tradition.

Generally speaking, such an outlook would encourage greater use of visual media in worship: perhaps flower arrangements or colorful cloths, drapes or clothing, or symbols, designs and pictures. It would also encourage more bodily movement, such as ceremonial actions and gestures, or dances, or simply greater expressiveness by worship leaders. Visual objects and ceremonies should not become so lavish that they violate the Mennonite value of simplicity. But we have often assumed that simplicity involves plainness: minimizing color, design and expressive movement. Must it? A sacramental outlook raises this question.

Sacramental thinking will also invite us to learn from traditions that emphasize sacraments: Catholic, Episcopal, Orthodox, Lutheran and others. If we allow our impressions of them to be challenged, we can gain much from their rich understandings of sacramentality. However, I would caution against adopting practices from these traditions indiscriminately. Some of these are linked with questionable theologies and other practices. An increased awareness of sacramental traditions, instead, should lead us into deeper exploration of Scripture and our own tradition.

If we explore our heritage in this light, we may conclude that some of our practices, such as believer's baptism, are more fully sacramental than some in other churches, such as infant baptism. A better understanding of sacramentality need not blur distinctions between our denomination and others, for it will often increase our appreciation of our own distinctives.

To give another example. In celebrating the Lord's Supper, Mennonites tend to focus on remembering Jesus' death. Sacramental traditions highlight the Supper's communal character and the Risen Jesus' presence. If we want to stress the last two features, we need not downplay remembrance and copy these traditions. Instead, acquaintance with their views can help us rediscover Anabaptist tradition—which often combined all three features.

In conclusion: Many Mennonites suppose the word "sacramental" refers to ceremonies that automatically impart divine grace. Since we believe grace calls for human response, most of us seldom use this word. Properly understood, however, sacramental concepts can express the Mennonite outlook in a comprehensive way. They can help us articulate our own views and connect our practical orientation with worship. If we explore sacramentality, we can learn from and relate more meaningfully to churches that stress sacraments. However, this need not blur important differences. Instead, fuller understanding of sacramentality, properly defined, can help us better appreciate and articulate our own distinctives. We might also help other churches appreciate more fully sacramentality's significance for everyday life and work. TM

Thomas Finger has taught theology, church history and spirituality at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., and at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. He is a member of Reba Place Church, Evanston, Ill.

In celebration of everyday worship

A case for worship that celebrates the ebb and flow of everyday life as we attempt to live as God's children.

by Richard L. Bowman

As a young boy growing up in Pennsylvania, I had three sets of clothes. At the beginning of each school year, my mother and the boys in our family went shopping for sturdy new blue jeans (we called them overalls) and new shirts that were only for school. On Sundays I wore a pair of good pants and a white shirt, and suspenders until I was in fourth grade, when I became a "big" boy. Then there were the older, "everyday" clothes, well-used and often patched. Might these be useful metaphors for our different worship styles, both for what we do in the church building on Sundays and in other settings?

Jesus spent time praying alone and with his disciples, participated in temple and synagogue rituals (the Sunday-clothes style of worship), but he taught, healed and otherwise ministered to people in daily life (the everyday-clothes style of worship). There is a place for contemplative retreats, litanies, Gregorian chant and other forms of more formal and symbolic worship. Others have advocated this style of worship. But there is also a place for worship that highlights the hurts, frustrations, mistakes, sins and joys that frame so much of human existence. This worship celebrates the ebb and flow of everyday life as we attempt to live as God's children. Many of us often connect best with God through such "everyday worship" on Sundays, in small groups or in private devotional times.

In everyday worship the emphasis is on substance, not style, on function, not form.

When I wore my everyday clothes as a kid, I knew I could play with friends or cousins without worrying about my pants being torn or getting grass stains on them, or I could be on my hands and knees in the garden picking green beans, doing the job Mom told me to do. Wearing my everyday clothes, I was free to do and be whatever I wanted or needed to be and do. My concern was on my activities and not on my clothing.

As God's children, our lives should be lives of worship and not just on Sunday mornings. When we worship (both individually and corporately), we focus on our need of and relationship with God. In our worship of God we learn to be open to the needs of those around us—their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. We also learn what God wants us to be and do as citizens of his kingdom.

In everyday worship the emphasis is on substance, not style, on function, not form. What are the answered prayers, challenges and inspiration from God's Word and Spirit? How are people hurting and in need? How can we draw near God as we discover he has drawn near us? These are the building materials that form everyday worship. These are the situations Jesus was involved with.

Observe Jesus at the grave of Lazarus, reminded by Martha that Lazarus has been dead so long his decaying body will have a bad odor. See Jesus praying to God, then calling Lazarus to come back to life. This was a worship scene like no other.

Picture Jesus directing the largest potluck dinner with the least food, and we worry sometimes about whether there will be enough food. There were more than 5,000 people to be fed and only five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus prayed and broke the bread and fish. The disciples passed it all around and collected the leftovers. It was potluck as worship. Immediately afterward, Jesus took time alone on the mountain to pray, but that was on a mountain, not in the temple.

Look at that rich professional man climbing down out of a tree. What prompted Zacchaeus to climb the tree in the first place or Jesus to look up and invite himself to Zacchaeus' house for lunch? That must have been some kind of worship service, as those two, a scoundrel and the Messiah, walked along the road. Jesus summarizes the discussion with these exciting words: "Today salvation has come to this house" (Luke 19:9 NIV).

Again notice Jesus sitting and teaching a large crowd, but this time he pulls the disciples around him and lets the crowd listen in on the discussion. During this particular sermon on the hillside, Jesus begins with a series of blessings (excerpted from Matthew 5:3-10 NIV):

"Blessed are the poor in spirit.

"Blessed are those who mourn.

"Blessed are the meek.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

"Blessed are the merciful.

"Blessed are the pure in heart.

"Blessed are the peacemakers.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness."

What a description of true disciples of Christ! What a description of authentic worship! What a moment for worshiping God out in the world he has created and with humanity whom he loves!

Watch as a hungry and thirsty Jesus meets a woman on the fringes of her society in Samaria. He was breaking the rules, but the discussion cut right to the need of the woman to acknowledge her sin and receive the gift of forgiveness God had for her. Another person finds salvation. Another worship service of the everyday variety has occurred. Jesus even finds it a good opportunity to define true worship of God: "True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks" (John 4:23 NIV). It is not the style of worship God requires but the spirit and integrity with which we worship him.

Everyday worship values people more than performance, program or proprieties. It values the Spirit more than the splendor of time and place. It values caring for people more than creating the right atmosphere. What are practical ways to make our corporate worship (whether in Sunday morning gatherings, midweek meetings or small group settings) authentic everyday-worship experiences?

With an emphasis on people, we can encourage and affirm each person to fill a role in the worship experience, not just the star performers. We should be led to meaningful meditation as the Scripture is read well and dramatically by one who has this gift. But we should also be led to significant worship of God as the Scripture is read haltingly by one who has seen much of the roughness life can bring. We should be as joyful listening to a young child playing "Silent Night" on the piano, with an occasional pause or a missed note or an untimely rhythm, as we are listening to a talented adult violinist. Can our Christmas and Easter programs be times of celebrating talents dedicated to God's service as well as times of allowing people to explore and express their gifts to God, even when these are not fully developed or when they may never be fully developed?

Can we design our worship experiences, in the congregational forum as well as in small group settings, to be open and inviting to people from different cultural backgrounds, religious preparations and life experiences? We should admit and share our own shortcomings and sins, submitted to God's honest but gracious scrutiny, as a demonstration of the reality of God's acceptance and forgiveness of all us sinners. Is our worship structured so that it appears only the petty sins of the already perfect can be forgiven by God? Do we give time for sharing with the whole group about our fears, joys, seemingly trivial sorrows (the child wanting to let everyone know that their family had to put their dog to sleep last week), blessings from Bible reading and even aches and pains?

While appreciating the peace, insights and challenges produced by art in its many forms in worship, we must still affirm and work toward implementing the belief that the most beautiful work of all is the working of God's Spirit in the lives of his people. Can we remember that the Holy Spirit is at work in each of God's children, regardless of their place in human society, their gender, age or physical attributes? Are we awed too much by the beauty of an elaborate church building instead of the intricacies of God's Spirit working with us as his redeemed children?

Everyday worship values people more than performance, program or proprieties. It values the Spirit more than the splendor of time and place.

Everyday worship is not always well-organized, may be messy at times and even occasionally be uncomfortable. But it can come from the hearts and lives of God's people living daily as his children in a finite, imperfect world. We must reach out to God in worship, even when we are not within the walls of a beautiful church or when life is not all together.

Richard L. Bowman is an overseer for Central District in Virginia Mennonite Conference and a member of Mount Clinton Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Why we pray for the president but cannot support the war

A case for the nonresistant pacifist

by Levi Miller

A friend reminds me that Christian conscientious objectors are uninteresting people in regard to war. We are so predictable. Whether the war is in Bosnia, Vietnam, Germany, Colombia or the Middle East, we cannot participate in it because we are pacifists.

If we're boring, we're not always easy. Ironically, nonresistant Christians generally are friendly and respectful to their governments, whether here in North America, in Latin America or in the 19th-century Russian Empire. Whatever the justice of the Colombian Mennonite Church's opposition to its current government, its position is not typical of the Mennonite experience with the state.

Even during the unpopular Vietnam War, many U.S. pacifists were grateful to live in the United States and for the freedoms afforded us. The main alternative political system, the Soviet Union or one of its satellite countries, was more interesting for study than for actual living. Cuba's imprisoned island population is still a reminder of those days. We were expressing what has been a common refrain among nonresistant Christians. We are grateful for the state's role to provide a place for its citizens to live what our confessions called "quiet and peaceable lives" and to protect the innocent and punish the wicked.

We are grateful for the state's role to provide a place for its citizens to live what our confessions called "quiet and peaceable lives" and to protect the innocent and punish the wicked.

So how does a nonresistant pacifist view the Iraq War and the current U.S.-Coalition military presence there in an effort to establish a democratic nonbelligerent state? Let me first state a nonresistant response in its most positive respect for the role of the state.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, only one power was left to serve as world police officer, the United States. After most of us spent our lives living with a terrible nuclear danger and standoff, the cold war had ended. We were quietly grateful that the world was a safer place and by implication that leaders such as Reagan, Mulroney, Thatcher and Gorbachev had used their moral, political and military power to end the cold war.

By the 1990s, however, it was clear that small wars would continue and that innocents would be slaughtered. I write this during the 10th anniversary of the Rwandan war, when more than 800,000 people, mainly civilians, were brutally killed. The United Nations, the United States or Europe could have stopped it but chose not to take this military police action.

After the 9-11 attacks, President Bush, who was elected as an isolationist, became active as a world police officer and has been trying by military force to impose a democratic, nonbelligerent Arab state in Afghanistan and Iraq. The intent is that a pluralistic, democratic Arab state would emerge like Turkey, Egypt or Jordan, a new opportunity in the Middle East, and in the long-term this would reduce tensions with Israel and other democracies.

The nonresistant may grant this fairly boilerplate thinking to his or her government and still not support the war. Pacifists come in 50 other variations, including those who say only the UN should be granted police action legitimacy. Other pacifists are openly hostile to the U.S. government, considering it the primary danger to world peace.

But it is the nonresistant pacifist being addressed here, and many are favorable to their governments. Yet they cannot support war—this war, all war—and cannot participate in it. Christians from various traditions—Catholics, Methodists, Baptists, Amish, Mennonites, Brethren, Quakers and Hutterites—confess and act on such a faith.

Nonresistance is a Mennonite belief, from the earliest Anabaptist confessions to the 1995 Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective. Though it gets little institutional and academic support, this form of biblical pacifism persists in both acculturated and traditional Christian bodies, especially at the local membership level.

While nonresistant Christians get sustenance from Scripture and church history, they are also realistic about human nature and recognize human fallibility and sin.

Its appeal is on several levels. It is based on biblical Christian love supported by centuries of church tradition and it acknowledges fallen human nature. Nonresistant conscientious objection to war goes back to primitive Christianity. During the first two centuries after Christ, his followers did not serve in the armed forces.

Nonresistant Christians recall that Jesus taught love of enemies. When questioned by Pilate, Jesus said his kingdom was not of this world, or else his servants would fight.

For Amish, Brethren, Mennonites and Hutterites, the ultimate nonresistant book is *Martyrs Mirror*, and the prototypical story is that of Dirk Willems, the Anabaptist who rescued his pursuer.

While nonresistant Christians get sustenance from Scripture and church history, they are also realistic about human nature and recognize human fallibility and sin. They know it is difficult to govern a world of unregenerate people, hence they give legitimacy to government's use of force, such as in Romans 13:3, "For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad."

Such pacifists appreciate the state for fulfilling its role of protecting the innocent and punishing evil. Nonresistant Christians would confess with Mennonite theologian A. James Reimer that God is love, but God is not a pacifist. They arrived at their own form of Christian realism long before the chastened liberal theologian Reinhold Niebuhr got there in the 1930s. They had read of sin in the Bible, experienced it in their persecution history and in their own pettiness.

Nevertheless, most nonresistants would say Niebuhr was closer to describing the human condition than were the optimistic pacifist-leaning theologians against whom he was writing in the 1930s. Fascism in Germany and Communism in Russia were turning the "Christian century" into the most brutal century.

Nonresistants may have political views that are generally supportive of their government, or they may oppose it. They may even participate in government to the extent that they are appointed or elected—given their beliefs. But, and this is important, this sphere is not their main arena of activity. Their main contribution is in civil society; they are activist in volunteerism, service and charity work. Their main arena is the church, and they are key supporters of its mission agencies and charities.

When nonresistants pray for their president but withhold support of the war and refuse to participate in it, they are responding in a historic tradition. Over half a century ago, my predecessor here in Scottdale, Pa., Edward Yoder, wrote pacifist Christian literature for his church during the day but privately wrote in his journal that he hoped the Allies would win World War II.

Ironies and inconsistencies abound. Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder wrote a book, *Nevertheless*, on the varieties of Christian pacifism, noting the problems with each type. Most nonresistants would agree with Yoder and be well aware of the inconsistencies of their commitment. Yet they humbly confess human inadequacy and still trust a loving God to lead them.

Because of the strength of their tradition in biblical teaching, church history and human experience, nonresistants gratefully persist. They confess and humbly believe that if more people would live as they do, soldiers would be rare, and war would not be necessary.

Levi Miller is director of Herald Press of Mennonite Publishing Network and a member of Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

mennonite churches usa

Iglesia Luz del Evangelico, Dallas, Texas, is part of a growing network of Hispanic congregations in mid-Texas that belong to the Mennonite Church USA conferences of Western District and South Central. At this Sunday evening service on July 4, the vibrant warmth of the people and lively worship drew me into God's presence and a genuine spirit of community. The congregation, pastored by Juan Limones, began about 12 years ago in another meetinghouse and moved to this building a year later. The congregation has grown to more than 140 members. Some of these are of Mexican descent but grew up in Texas, while others are from such countries as Mexico and El Salvador. About 70 of the members participated in this evening service. It included worship led by a high-spirited praise band and a worship dance by two young girls (large center photo), a prayer time and a fellowship meal after the service. Clockwise, the other photos show the following: A young girl enjoys eating corn-on-the-cob during fellowship time. A young family participates in the worship. Nicolas Garcia, a lay leader in the congregation, gives a passionate Fourth of July message, including the idea that Christ is the one who gives us true freedom. Esther Martinez (left), a lay leader in the congregation who preaches and teaches, prays for a woman at the front of the sanctuary.—*Laurie L. Oswald*

Photos by Laurie L. Oswald

Back to work again

Marlene Kropf is director of the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board Office of Congregational Life.

In August many people take vacations. By mid-September the pace of life and work accelerates rapidly, and the feeling of rest and refreshment too quickly vanishes.

Our work is a significant way we participate in God's loving, liberating reign on earth. Whether we harvest crops or teach young children or maintain computer networks, we are joining our desires and energy with God's intentions to heal and renew the earth.

But work also has a shadow side. Some don't have good work to do; others have too much. Many of us allow work to dominate our lives and relationships in unhealthy ways.

Prayer: This summer, while spending several days on retreat among Benedictine sisters, I noted their attitudes toward work. The first thing I saw is that work is punctuated by communal prayer for 30 minutes four times a day. At 7 a.m., before breakfast and the work day begins, everyone in the community gathers to pray the Psalms and seek God's blessing on the day. At 11:30 a.m. and 5 p.m., they leave their work to pray. Computer stations sit empty, cleaning equipment is set aside; office doors are closed. Again, at 7 p.m., the community gathers to sing, listen to Scripture and offer the day and all creation into God's care and safekeeping.

Dignity: A second thing that caught my attention is the dignity accorded to work—no matter what it was. Kitchen staff carried out their tasks as though feeding people and cleaning up afterward was a high calling. Carpenters went about their projects with diligence and care, their hands attentive to both beauty and function. When I dropped by a shop one afternoon where the sisters' handwork and art are offered for sale, the sister at the counter spent half an hour introducing me to the collection. Whether the item was a framed piece of delicate tatting, a sturdy potholder pieced together from fabric scraps, a colorful photograph on a note card or a stunning silk scarf or stole hand-dyed in exquisite colors, she introduced the artists by name and age. Each one, no matter how humble or great her contribution, was honored for her work.

Although it can be easy to idealize such communities and their practices, I observed a spirit of wholeness and peace that could not be denied. I heard the Spirit inviting me to become more Benedictine in my work life.

September is a good time of year to pause and assess our attitudes toward work. While summer still lingers and before we succumb to the pressures of the fall season, we should consider how God might be calling us to be renewed in our work. Karl Barth emphasizes that the Sabbath relativizes our work; by needing to pause periodically and cease working, we rediscover that work is not an ultimate concern. The gift of Sabbath—whether that is weekly worship, a daily time apart with God or the refreshment of summer vacation—is not only meant to renew us but to remind us that God has the world in good hands. We do not need to over-function or overwork.

Some questions for consideration as we enter a new year of work:

Is God calling us to punctuate our workday with prayer? Do we want to re-establish spaces in our lives for meeting God every morning and evening? A delightful book that offers simple suggestions for pausing to pray throughout the day is *St. Benedict on the Freeway: A Rule of Life for the 21st Century* by Corinne Ware (Abingdon Press, 2001). A favorite daily guide for prayer for many people is *Celtic Benediction: Morning and Night Prayer* by J. Philip Newell (Eerdmans, 2000).

Is God calling us to repent of work habits or attitudes that deform our lives and relationships? Do we desire a nourishing, creative vision of work? See *Hearts to God: Hands to Work: Connecting Spirituality and Work* by Steve Jacobsen (Alban Institute, 1997) or *The Active Life: A Spirituality of Work, Creativity and Caring* by Parker J. Palmer (Harper & Row, 1990).

Is God inviting us to relativize our work by setting aside one day each quarter for retreat—catching our breath, dwelling in Christ's presence and regaining God's perspective on our work and mission? Find some friends to join you and plan a day-long retreat this fall. For planning ideas, take a look at *Soul Guide: How to Plan and Guide Inspirational Retreats*, edited by Rose Mary Stutzman (Herald Press, 2003).

This fall I'm grateful to have good work to do. In my visit among the Benedictines, I also heard God calling me to pause more often to pray and to rest from my work. What is God saying to you? TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Where each presidential candidate may lead us** —various authors
- **Anabaptist faith and American democracy**—Ted Grimsrud
- **Prayers before the election**—J. Robert Charles

MCC asks for 5,000 messages about wall

430-mile barrier in Israel viewed by Palestinians as attempt to take their land

Mennonite Central Committee's Washington Office is inviting Anabaptist congregations to send 5,000 emails, letters, faxes or pictures to President Bush and members of Congress between September and December 2004, urging them to call on Israeli and Palestinian leaders to build bridges for peace, not walls that divide.

The campaign is being launched in response to a 430-mile-long separation barrier, now under construction by Israelis. Israelis say the barrier—a zone of fences, nine-meter-high concrete walls, barbed wire and patrol roads—is necessary for security. It also gobbles up prime Palestinian farmland and is viewed by many Palestinians as an attempt to take their ancestral land.

The MCC Washington Office will track and list the total number of submissions on the campaign's Web site, www.mcc.org/us/bridges.

"What we're hoping to do is to remind the President and Congress that historically building walls does not produce a peaceful and just environment," says Daryl Byler, director of the MCC Washington Office.

"What it will do is cut down contact and communication at a grass-roots level," Byler says and notes that is exactly the level where lasting peace efforts are likely to originate.

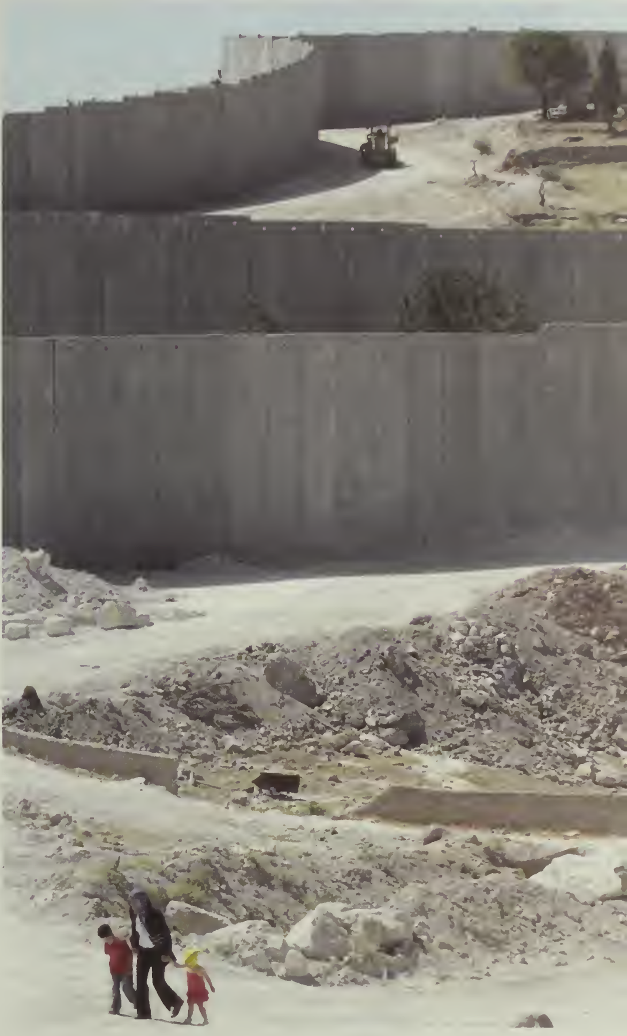
Byler notes that in the new MCC video *The Dividing Wall* Palestinian Christian Alex Awad, vice president of Bethlehem Bible College, appeals to Christians in the United States to write letters about the wall to U.S. policy makers.

"It's imperative that Christians in the United States are aware of what their brothers and sisters in Palestine are experiencing," Byler says. "I think of Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians that when one part of the body suffers, we all suffer. Sometimes we're not aware of a part of the body that suffers. We need to be aware."

The Web site includes a slate of resources to help congregations learn more about the issue. They include *The Dividing Wall*, a new MCC video and DVD; the September/October issue of MCC's free magazine, *A Common Place*; the July-September issue of the Peace Office Newsletter; and a booklet, "What is Palestine/Israel? Answers to Common Questions," which can be downloaded from the Web site.

One section of the site provides addresses for the President, senators and representatives and shares tips for speaking with or writing to lawmakers. The site also encourages participants to write from their hearts. Children and youth may decide to draw pictures or other works of art instead of writing a letter.

Congregations and individuals are asked to send letters to lawmakers—then provide the MCC Washington Office with the name of their congregation and the total number of letters sent—by e-mailing jdb@mcc.org or calling 202-544-6564, ext. 2. The Washington Office will update its Web site list of participating congregations each week.—*MCC News Service*



Ryan Beiler

Pedestrians walk in front of the partially constructed 430-mile barrier that separates Israelis and Palestinians.

International Missions Association participants (from left) Kenna Dula, Philip Okeyo, Tilahun Beyene, Javier Soler, Richard and Jewel Showalter and Mervin Charles give thanks to God and to the Sula District of the Honduran Mennonite Church for its gift of $600 to support international missions through the IMA.

Dale D. Gehman

Mission agencies celebrate in Honduras

International Missions Association provides mission-to-mission coordination.

Representatives of 15 Anabaptist-Mennonite mission agencies in Africa, Asia, and North and South America gathered in Honduras July 21-22 to confer and celebrate God's work around the world. While welcoming the group and noting its strategic importance as a mission-with-mission endeavor, Richard Showalter, president of the International Missions Association (IMA) and of Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM), gave a brief history.

Since organizing in 1997 in Calcutta, India, with charter members from PIPKA in Indonesia, Amor Viviente in Honduras, Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia and EMM in the United States, the IMA has grown to include other member mission groups from the United States, India, Honduras, Tanzania, the Philippines and Kenya.

During the gathering in July, the 10 IMA member programs shared reports and prayer needs with the group.

For PIPKA in Indonesia, Yesaya Abdi told of the church's outreach on five of Indonesia's 13,000 islands. They also have sent workers to the Himalayas, Mongolia and Hong Kong.

"This networking is wonderful," said Kenna Dula, interim general secretary for Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) in Ethiopia. "I see in a new way that if Latins and Africans stand together, we can also reach out to Europe and America."

If Latins and Africans stand together, we can also reach out to Europe and America. —Kenna Dula

He reported that the MKC evangelism and mission department is committed to preaching and establishing indigenous churches among the remaining 55-60 unreached people groups in Ethiopia. They currently support 94 church planters among 14 of the groups. They have sent workers to Djibouti and Somaliland.

Amor Viviente's Javier Soler spoke of their strong sense of call to missions in Europe, particularly Spain. They envision a missions training center in southern Spain from which they could begin reaching into Morocco. While continuing to expand within Honduras, Amor Viviente church planters have also begun work in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Costa Rica.

"In the Philippines we are building a church and mission center," said Walfrido Libunao for the Integrated Mennonite Churches of the Philippines. As they continue church planting among the tribal peoples they also envision more urban church planting in Manila. While sending a Filipina missionary to Hong Kong, the IMC is developing more tent-making work for pastors and missionaries.

Melvin Fernandez reported that the Honduran Mennonite Church has at least 42 missionary efforts from their churches—including work in the United States and Spain. They are giving training for work in the Muslim world and hope within the next year to send someone to Morocco.

Samuel Lopez reported for Misiòn Red (Network), the mission agency of the Spanish Mennonite Council, which is headquartered in Lancaster, Pa. Since its beginning in 1992 they have planted 26 churches in Mexico, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and the United States. This year they are planting five new churches.

IMA's next meeting may take place in Indonesia in May 2005 along with the 40th anniversary of PIPKA.—*Jewel Showalter of EMM News Service*

Taiwanese woman gives up godshelf

A quarter-century of prayers and conversations leads to Christian faith.

Bi-Yue Wang watched with a quiet smile as a hammer splintered the highly polished treasures of gilded wood. Her family, her pastor, members of her congregation and mission workers did nothing to stop the destruction of her property. In fact, they encouraged it, tossing once-sacred objects—golden incense pots, red lamps and bowls that had held offerings of rice and fruit—into a garbage bag.

More than 25 years of prayer preceded Wang's decision to demolish her godshelf, the altar where she had prayed to Buddhist-Taoist gods and the spirits of her ancestors.

Mennonite Mission Network's Marietta Sawatzky and her husband, Sheldon, witnessed the dismantling of Wang's godshelf.

"[Wang's family] literally smashed the table and god pictures," Marietta said. "They then took the broken table up the hillside in back of the house and burned it—quite a bonfire. Afterward, we told [Wang] how courageous she was. She certainly did not display any fear [of reprisal from the spirits she had formerly worshiped]."

Wang, a petite woman of an age commanding respect in Taiwan, destroyed her godshelf in preparation for her baptism on June 20. Her son-in-law, Titus Liao, baptized her in the Zhong Ping Mennonite Church in Taoyuan, Taiwan.

From their base in this same city, Marietta Sawatzky coordinates the Mennonite Mission Network prayer ministries, and Sheldon Sawatzky serves as the agency's director for East Asia.

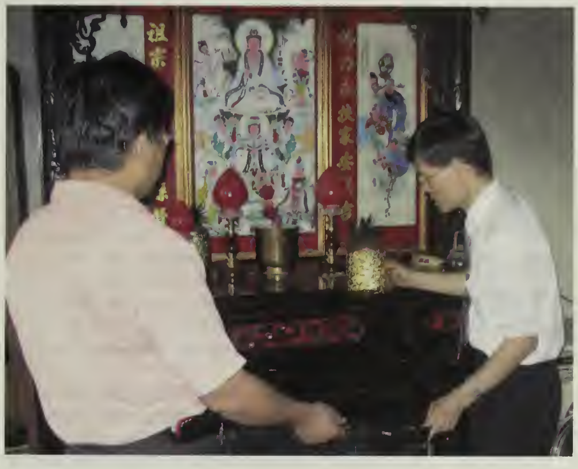
Although Jeannie Zehr was on the other side of the world during this momentous occasion in Wang's life, she had played a significant role. Zehr worked for Commission on Overseas Mission, a predecessor agency of Mennonite Mission Network, for 18 years.

When Zehr visited Taiwan in 1989, Wang's daughter—Hannah Liao—hosted Zehr's delegation for lunch. Liao asked her Mennonite guests to join her in prayer for family members who opposed her conversion to Christianity.

Liao recounted the story of her conversion to Christianity as a high-school student. After she decided to follow Jesus, she immediately began praying that the rest of her family might also experience the joy she felt.

Pursuing God's call to ministry, she enrolled at Central Taiwan Theological Seminary, where she formed a group to pray regularly for students' parents who were not yet Christians.

Though Liao's father threatened to disown her, he had never fully turned his back on her. Her parents even attended her wedding to Titus Liao, a fellow seminary student.



Sheldon Sawatzky

Titus Liao, Bi-Yue Wang's pastor and son-in-law, tosses Buddhist-Taoist worship objects into a garbage bag before taking up a hammer to smash the godshelf. A family friend (with back to camera) helps hold the bag.

Zehr took Hannah Liao's plea for prayer seriously and said, "[Meeting with the Liaos] was one of those times when I just ached because I couldn't speak the language. "Sheldon [Sawatzky] generously translated, but it feels so inadequate when you can't say things yourself. When we returned home to Kansas, I tried to remember Hannah's prayer request for her parents and did so quite often."

Zehr had opportunities to renew her friendship with the Liaos. In 1995, she reciprocated the Taiwanese couple's hospitality when Titus Liao visited Newton, Kan., with a group of pastors.

"I remember asking about Hannah's parents and mentioning I was continuing to pray for them. The fact I was remembering evidently surprised and pleased the Liaos," Zehr said.

The Liaos and Zehr continue to send letters and gifts back and forth across the Pacific Ocean.

At the June baptismal service, Hannah Liao tearfully recounted the events of the past quarter century—from her own conversion to her mother's.

"Hannah mentioned her gratitude to the friend in America who shared this concern over the years, relating Jeannie's connection with them," Marietta said. "It certainly was a joyful day for the family."

The Sawatzkys have been an important link in the communication between Zehr and the Liaos. "Marietta kept me informed every step along the way with commentary and photos of the burning of the godshelf and Mrs. Wang's baptism," Zehr said.

In the empty space once occupied by the godshelf, Wang's family and friends helped her hang a large painting depicting scenes from Jesus' life.
—Lynda Hollinger-Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network News Service

MCC Canada gets national warehouse

Plum Coulee, Man., leaders offer 7,200-square-foot facility for relief supplies.

More than 350 people turned out Sept. 1 for the grand opening and dedication of Mennonite Central Committee's Canadian national warehouse in Plum Coulee, Man. Several hundred more toured the new MCC facilities in the small rural community located 80 kilometers southwest of Winnipeg.

MCC's Canadian warehouse is expected to streamline the gathering and shipping of goods in a more timely fashion.

"It also enables us to provide [a more] rapid deployment of our resources to all parts of the world," said MCC Canada executive director Don Peters. "This central Canadian warehouse will [also] reduce the space needed by provincial centers for storage, freeing up space for group work projects."

MCC had been studying the idea of adding warehouse space to its current facilities in Winnipeg on land already owned by the organization. But discussions with representatives from Plum Coulee led to an offer to rent a 7,200-square-foot facility from local business owners, for a two-year period.

The warehouse will be a centralized depot and collect relief supplies from across Canada before shipping them to all parts of the world. The warehouse will also include a work-center space for youth groups, ladies groups and volunteers to assemble health kits, school kits and other aid packages.

"I hope volunteers from the surrounding communities will have the ability to support MCC, both here and from their own homes," said volunteer and local businessman John Redekop.

According to MCC Manitoba executive director Daniel Lepp Friesen, MCC is already making preparations to send a relief shipment from Plum Coulee destined for Sudan.

"Emergency responses like these are part of a wider story," said Lepp Friesen. "Many thousands of these blankets are shipped annually."

Winkler resident Helen Dyck related some of her postwar Russia experiences, noting the appreciation her family felt when they received three MCC blankets.

"These blankets comforted even our broken spirits," said Dyck after seeing a display of blankets. "MCC made a big impact on us. We saw them as a symbol of God's love," she added.

The festivities culminated in a dedication prayer by Abe Wiebe and ribbon cutting.—*Elmer Heinrichs of MCC Canada News Service*

It ... enables us to provide [a more] rapid deployment of our resources to all parts of the world.
—Don Peters

Jim Bishop

Down to the river to pray

Ray Hurst (right), co-pastor of Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., acknowledges the presence of a "cloud of witnesses" as he and Jason Gerlach (left), pastoral intern, prepare to baptize Greta Shenk (center).

Greta was among five young people baptized into church membership during an outdoor worship service held Sept. 5 at the home of Nancy and Doug Hendren. Also baptized into membership were Jesse Spaulding, Andrew Gingerich, Nathan Derstine and Hope Weaver.

The service included singing, expressions of commitment by the baptismal candidates and a litany and blessings by the parents. The congregation sang "Down to the River to Pray" for the processional to the Hendren's swimming pool and "Behold I Make All Things New" for the recessional following the baptisms.—*Jim Bishop*

Mennonite pastor may go to trial soon

Vietnamese leader was arrested March 2 for speaking out on human rights.

Some observers in Vietnam expect that Mennonite pastor Nguyen Hong Quang may be put on trial in Ho Chi Minh City as early as this month. Sources there say authorities are working hard to "fast track" Quang's trial on charges of "possessing and distributing materials harmful to the State." Other sources, however, believe the government needs more time to review evidence to make its case in court.

A court decision to prosecute would be followed by publication of the indictment and the trial. If convicted on these charges, Quang, who was arrested on June 8, could face up to 20 years in prison. Sources also say that it is likely that the four evangelists arrested on March 2 and still held without being charged will face a less serious charge of "resisting an officer doing official duty."

Le Thi Hong Lien, a female evangelist, was arrested in early July and is still imprisoned.

Months after their arrests—despite a Vietnamese law stating visits must be allowed within 30 days of incarceration—authorities have allowed monitored visits from the families of five of the "Mennonite Six," as they have become known. All six are being held in Ho Chi Minh City prison, not in the District Two jail, where they were first held.

Quang's wife and three young children visited him on Aug. 18. It was the second visit by Quang's wife.

The mother of brothers Nguyen Thanh Nhan and Nguyen Huu Nghia was allowed separate visits with them on Aug. 23. Her visit with one son was cut short when he began to describe how his brother had been severely beaten.

The father of Pham Ngoc Thach, who was badly beaten when arrested, visited his son in mid-July.

The wife of Nguyen Van Phuong, who gave birth to the couple's first child just before his March 2 arrest, has also been allowed one visit.

Le Thi Hong Lien has not been allowed a family visit because, according to police, she is "uncooperative."

An Aug. 17 report from ethnic minority Mennonite churches in Gia Lai province says that Christians there are still being arrested. In mid-May, two Mennonite evangelists, Ksor Ti No and Ksor Pui Nai, were arrested on unknown charges. Their families have not been allowed visits.

Vietnamese authorities apparently are surprised by the widespread negative publicity generated by their treatment of the Vietnamese Mennonites. It seems they were unaware that the Vietnamese Mennonites are part of a global church body, many of whose members have spoken out on behalf of the imprisoned leaders.

Other church-related and secular media organizations have published news about the Mennonite Six and several countries are putting pressure on Vietnamese authorities regarding the mistreatment of the Mennonite leaders and churches.

In a related development, representatives from the Hanoi office of the Bureau of Religious Affairs on Aug. 10 met the president of the Vietnam Mennonite Church, pastor Nguyen Quang Trung. They proposed that the church provide information in preparation for granting legal status to the Vietnam Mennonite Church.

They requested a detailed history and activities of the church both before and after 1975: a confession of faith and an organizational charter, the names of pastors, evangelists and volunteers, pre-1975 buildings, current worship groups and locations.

The timing of the offer, while key leaders of the Mennonite church are imprisoned, suggests that authorities are attempting to isolate these imprisoned leaders. While many church leaders agree in principle that legal recognition is good, they are concerned that authorities will use detailed information about the believers to further restrict and harass the church, especially in the Central Highlands.

In late August, Pastor Quang's wife was summoned to the police station, where she was politely told that it would be best to stop holding meetings in her home, which they said were illegal. When she asked them to put the request into writing, they quickly dropped the matter. Late that night, the police came to the house and examined the papers of all who were there.

Behind authorities' determination to silence Pastor Quang is his outspoken advocacy on human rights issues. In 1999, he advised and helped alleged squatter families file petitions of complaint against a land grab for "development." The confiscated land included the property of the Quang residence and Mennonite church office.

On Aug. 13, the 346 families received the news that the 1999 land confiscation order had been reversed. The order had, in fact, been reversed on Sept. 13, 2003, with a directive to inform the families within 10 days. However, authorities waited until two months after Pastor Quang's incarceration to make the announcement regarding the decision he had helped achieve.

In other news from the Hoi An Church in Central Vietnam, Nguyen Minh Sang reported that two women were baptized on Aug. 1 and that members of the church visit each other regularly to offer comfort and encouragement in the faith.

—Mennonite World Conference release from Vietnamese Ministries and other reports

Vietnamese authorities are ... surprised by the widespread negative publicity generated by their treatment of the Vietnamese Mennonites.

1,000 recipes for MCC's new cookbook

The kitchen is still open for those who want to submit recipes, say authors.

More than 1,000 recipes have poured in for consideration in Mennonite Central Committee's new cookbook, *Simply in Season*, but the authors are not closing the kitchen—yet.

The goal is that these recipes are ones families will return to over and over again.
—Cathleen Hockman-Wert

"We continue looking for fall and winter recipes," says Mary Beth Lind of West Virginia, who is co-author of the cookbook along with Cathleen Hockman-Wert of Oregon.

The new book, which builds on the legacy of the *More-with-Less* and *Extending the Table* cookbooks, focuses on locally produced, seasonal foods and is scheduled to be released in June 2005 through Herald Press.

"We plan to wind down the recipe collection process by the end of September," Lind says. "So to all those who'd like to submit a recipe for the book, now is the time to send it in."

Recipes can be entered online at the cookbook Web site, www.morewithless.org. Once received, the recipes are forwarded electronically to some 370 volunteer testers in 36 states, nine provinces and beyond. One tester even lives in New Zealand, where it's winter.

"The geographic spread of our testers is helpful, in terms of preparing these recipes using local fruits and vegetables when they're in season" Hockman-Wert says.

"In May, volunteers in Florida, Texas and California started testing recipes with summer foods like tomatoes, while some Canadians could test early season foods like sugar snap peas as late as July," says Hockman-Wert.

Sometimes multiple variations of the same dish are submitted to the project. To deal with this, a few special testers take on the task of preparing and comparing all versions of a particular recipe, such as salsa or apple pie.

This led to one "holy coincidence" when Hockman-Wert contacted tester Katrine Rose of New York, asking if she would become the project's basil pesto expert.

"Now I know the reason that I accidentally planted too much basil this year," Rose replied. "I had gone to the farmers' market to buy some various herb plants and had forgotten that I already had a fairly large mound of basil growing in the garden."

"I have also been pleased by the international flair of many recipe submissions, such as Thai green beans or spinach-stuffed burritos," Hockman-Wert says.

"These dishes aren't necessarily authentic to another culture, like you find in *Extending the Table*. Rather, they show how we have come to enjoy new flavors from around the world and have adapted them to familiar foods here," Hockman-Wert says.

Besides the tastier side of recipe gathering, the authors have discovered the recipe process reflects some of the history of the MCC cookbook series.

On one memorable day they received recipes from three generations of the same family. Jocele Meyer, who contributed a corn and cheese bake recipe to the *More-with-Less* cookbook, her daughter-in-law Mary Meyer and Mary's daughter Katie Meyer, all of Ohio, submitted recipes.

"We hope this is symbolic of how relevant *Simply in Season* is going to be across the generations: the generation that helped create *More-with-Less*, the generation that grew up with it, and now the generation just starting to do their own cooking," Lind says.

"The goal is that these recipes are ones families will return to over and over again because they're that good: relatively simple to prepare, nutritious and delicious," Hockman-Wert says.

To learn what types of recipes are currently most needed for *Simply in Season*, go to the discussion section of the cookbook Web site: www.morewithless.org.—*Mennonite Central Committee News Service*

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Sojourners launches election petition

"God is not a Republican … or Democrat" ad a response to Religious Right

More than 40 Christian leaders and 40,000 citizens signed a petition declaring that "God is not a Republican … or a Democrat" and that the Religious Right does not speak for them.

The petition refutes claims by Jerry Falwell that "Evangelical Christians … need to get serious about reelecting President Bush" and by Pat Robertson that "George Bush is going to win in a walk … the Lord's just blessing him."

The claims were posted on Web sites sponsored by the two well-known leaders.

The petition calls for all Christians to take back their faith and appeared as a full-page ad in the *The New York Times* on Aug. 30 and was paid for by nearly 3,500 supporters of *Sojourners*, the national Christian magazine and organization that initiated the petition.

The petition, found at www.takebackourfaith.org, also declares that Christians acting on personal conviction can choose to vote for any candidate and that they should consider a range of moral issues in this election, rejecting single-issue voting.

"We believe all candidates should be examined by measuring their policies against the complete range of Christian ethics and values," says the petition.

Jim Wallis, editor of *Sojourners* magazine, says, "When poverty has risen each of the past three years—that's a religious issue. The war in Iraq—that's a religious issue. Taking care of the environment—that's a religious issue. This behavior by the Religious Right—ordaining George W. Bush as 'God's candidate'—is theologically outrageous. How did the faith of Jesus come to be known as pro-rich and pro-war? They've tried to hijack our faith—it's time to take it back."

Within two weeks of the campaign's launch, more than 40,000 people signed the online petition. The ad includes 45 prominent signers, including heads of denominations, presidents and professors of Christian seminaries and colleges, pastors and authors.

The diverse signatories include prominent Christians from across the theological spectrum, including best-selling evangelical author Philip Yancey, Yale theologian Miroslav Volf, Fuller Theological Seminary ethicist Glen Stassen, Evangelical Covenant Church president Glen Palmberg, Candler School of Theology professor of social ethics Robert M. Franklin Jr., Baptist minister and evangelical speaker Tony Campolo, Reformed Church in America general secretary Wes Granberg-Michaelson, Benedictine author Joan Chittister, Duke theological ethics professor Stanley Hauerwas and Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM.

Because of the responses from people across the nation, the petition also appeared as a full-page ad in *The News & Advance* (Falwell's local newspaper in Lynchburg, Va.) and *The Virginian-Pilot* (Robertson's local newspaper in Hampton Roads, Va.). In response to thousands of individual donations, *Sojourners* is also establishing a fund to help people place the ad in their hometown newspapers.

> **Christians acting on personal conviction can choose to vote for any candidate.**
> —Jim Wallis

"The Religious Right has a powerful hold on many individuals and churches in our country," says Brian McLaren, popular Christian author and pastor of Cedar Ridge Community Church in Maryland. "Many of them have never even heard a responsible counterpoint expressed by thoughtful, biblically rooted Christian thinkers and leaders."

Placement of a full-page ad in *The New York Times* on Aug. 30—the first day of the Republican National Convention—followed the delivery of a similar message by Wallis to the Democratic National Convention in a luncheon on faith and politics in Boston during the DNC.

In a *Boston Globe* op-ed piece in late August, Wallis declared that "the best public contribution of religion is precisely not to be ideologically predictable or a loyal partisan."—*Deryl Davis of* Sojourners *News Service*

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CALENDAR

Belmont Mennonite Church 75th Anniversary/Homecoming Oct. 16-17 at 925 Oxford St., Elkhart, IN. All former attenders invited. Sat. evening, Dessert Theatre, 6:30 p.m. Sunday worship 9:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Speakers, James Lapp and Miriam Book. For more information contact belmont@maplenet.net or 574-293-5160.

WORKERS

Lehman, John, began July 9 as chaplain at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, Harrisonburg, Va.

Peterson, Ken, began June 13 as pastor at Providence Mennonite Church, Newport News, Va.

Post, Stephen, was ordained Aug. 22 as pastor at Grand Marais (Mich.) Mennonite Church.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Barrett, Elijah Gabriel, March 17, to Rick and Kim Souder Barrett, Goshen, Ind.

Beck, Brayden Matthew, Aug. 29, to Jason and Brandy Durbin Beck, Toledo, Ohio.

Blosser, Brenden Marc, July 31, to Marc and Angie Schrock Blosser, Goshen, Ind.

Epp, Tyler Allen, June 16, to Chris and Jackie Miller Epp, Wichita, Kan.

Frederick, Zachary Aiden, Aug. 20, to Tim and Kim Greaser Frederick, Souderton, Pa.

Herris, Ryan Henry, July 8, to Mark and Christy Herris, Indianapolis.

Hertzler, Noah Brunk, July 27, to Andre and Valerie Brunk Hertzler, Harrisonburg, Va.

Holdeman, Nathaniel Lee, Aug. 5, to Bruce and Jennifer Shelton Holdeman, Denver, Colo.

Lacher, Sophia Grace, Sept. 2, to Chad and Jennifer Goshow Lacher, Sellersville, Pa.

Penner, Josiah Neufeld, July 4, to Todd and Martha Neufeld Penner, Goshen, Ind.

Schloneger, Norah Rose, Aug. 16, to Mark and Sarah Hubbard Schloneger, Harrisonburg, Va.

Wenger, Brodie Jon, Aug. 12, to Jon and Ginger Whyle Wenger, Wayland, Iowa.

MARRIAGES

Baer/Webb: Jennifer Baer, Harrisonburg, Va., and Kristopher Webb, Albuquerque, N.M., June 20.

Boshart/Noll: Katie Boshart, Wayland, Iowa, and Chris Noll, Harrisonburg, Va., July 10 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Busch/Graber: Brad Busch, Wichita, Kan., and Stephanie Graber, Wayland, Iowa, May 15 in Wayland.

Derksen/Schrock: Karina Derksen, Lancaster, Pa., and Andrew Schrock, Lancaster, July 10 in Lancaster.

Fretz/Powell: Amanda Fretz, Red Lake, Ont., and Andrew Powell, Amelia, Va., July 31 at Red Lake Mennonite Church.

Gingerich/Yoder: Jennifer Gingerich, Milford, Ind., and Freddie Yoder, Millersburg, Ohio, Aug. 14 at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Goers/Schroth: Jane Goers, Belleville, Pa., and Fred Schroth, Rochester, N.Y., July 3 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Graber/Jirak: Susan Graber, Lafayette, Colo., and Tom Jirak, Denver, Colo., May 1 at Boulder (Colo.) Mennonite Church.

Habusta/Kauffman: Shelley Habusta, Goshen, Ind., and Jason Kauffman, Goshen, June 26 at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Kaufman/Klingenberg: Kara Kaufman, Hillsboro, Kan., and Derek Klingenberg, Peabody, Kan., June 5 at Trinity Mennonite Church, Hillsboro.

King/Sellers: Brent King, Belleville, Pa., and Rachel Sellers, Reedsville, Pa., July 19 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Kulp/Souder: Ryan Kulp, Telford, Pa., and ReBecca Souder, Telford, Aug. 28 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Oder/Swartley: Amanda Oder, Newport News, Va., and Michael Swartley, Harrisonburg, Va., June 19 at First Baptist Church of Newport News.

DEATHS

Allebach, Kenneth, 17, Telford, Pa., died Aug. 24 in an automobile accident. Parents: Rodney and Lynne McMullan Allebach. Funeral: Aug. 30 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Deckert, Annie Sawatzky, 95, North Newton, Kan., died Aug. 23. Spouse: Alvin Deckert (deceased). Parents: Jacob F. and Cornelia Klassen Sawatzky. Children: Kenneth, Marion, Alison Hiebert; four grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 27 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Denlinger, Wilmer, 76, Quakertown, Pa., died Aug. 18. Spouse: Bertie Strine Denlinger. Parents: Roy and Fern Clark Denlinger. Children: Barry, Bonnie Odgen, Brian; six grandchildren.

Dyck, Elfrieda Klassen, 87, Scottdale, Pa., died Aug. 20. Spouse: Peter Dyck. Parents: Franz and Justina Wiebe Klassen. Children: Rebecca, Ruth Scott; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 28 at Scottdale Mennonite Church.

Fulmer, Irene H., 89, Lititz, Pa., died Aug. 9. Spouse: Harrison H. Fulmer (deceased). Parents: Harry and Suie Burkhart. Children: Harold, Richard, Walter, Elsie Weaver, Mary Hoefler, Judy Madewell, James (deceased); 21 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Landis Valley Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

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Hostetler, Orie W., 93, Shipshewana, Ind., died Aug. 23. Spouse: Ruby Mishler Hostetler (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Carolyn Rheinheimer Hostetler. Children: Letha Bontrager, Verda Bontrager, Rosalie Simon, Jim, Glen; five grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 26 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana.

Johnson, Iva Stoll, 75, Casselton, N.D., died Aug. 4 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Fay V. Johnson (deceased). Parents: Abraham and Fanny Yoder Stoll. Children: Edwin, Pauline Khoury, Thomas, Robert Bristow-Johnson, Dianna Gagner, Donald Sturm; 15 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 7 at Casselton Mennonite Church..

Kauffman, Ruth Widmer, 85, Dresden, Kan., died Sept. 2. Spouse: Henry Kauffman (deceased). Parents: Christian and Emma Brenneman Widmer. Children: Larry, Bette, Adin, Kenneth, Ramona Amlong; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 7 at Kalona (Iowa) Mennonite Church.

Kennel, Lester N., 84, Shickley, Neb., died July 11. Spouse: Lola Stauffer Kennel. Parents: Peter and Anna Reeb Kennel. Children: Ron, Cecil, Deb Jaberg; five grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 14 at Salem Mennonite Church, Shickley.

Linder, Lena I., 86, Louisville, Ohio, died Aug. 16. Parents: Eli and Lizzie Schmucker Linder. Funeral: Aug. 20 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville.

Martin, E. Ruel, 92, Harrisonburg, Va., died Aug. 7. Spouse: Ruby Brunk Martin (deceased). Parents: Elmer L. and Amanda Baer Martin. Children: Helen Driver, Bernard, Gerald, Arlin, Nelson; 14 grandchildren; 36 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 11 at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Myers, Clarence R., 79, Pipersville, Pa., died Aug. 11. Spouse: Elizabeth Miller Myers. Parents: Harrison and Anna Rice Myers. Children: Roland, Stewart, Gordon, Marietta, Ralph; eight grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 14 at Deep Run East Mennonite Church, Perkasie, Pa.

Nickel, Nancy, 98, Geneva, Neb., died Aug. 28. Spouse: Elmer Nickel (deceased). Parents: Nicholas and Magdelena Rediger Lichti. Child: Roger. Funeral: Aug. 31 at Salem Mennonite Church, Shickley, Neb.

Redden III, John Albert, 54, Ft. Wayne, Ind., died Aug. 7. Spouse: Beth Redden. Parents: John A. and Marion E. Redden. Child: Sean.

Schierling, Ann D. Regehr, 91, Inman, Kan., died Aug. 18. Spouse: Frank Schierling (deceased). Parents: J.J. and Helena Regehr. Children: Dolores Eby, Darleen Hasler, Diane Thiessen, Connie Epp; 11 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 21 in North Inman Cemetery.

Shank, Ruth Hess, 83, Lititz, Pa., died July 13. Spouse: James M. Shank (deceased). Parents: David and Lydia Buckwalter Shank Hess. Children: James Jr., David, Lois Davidson; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 23 at Landis Homes West Chapel, Lititz.

Sperling, Leslie A., 85, Inman, Kan., died Sept. 1. Spouse: Kathryn Esau Sperling. Parents: Cornelius C. and Anna Schmidt Sperling. Children: Leslie A., Kathleen Fagerlund; two grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 4 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman.

Weyandt, Fern E. Goldsmith, 83, Archbold, Ohio, died Aug. 20. Spouse: Harold Weyandt (deceased). Parents: Harry and Caroline Sauder Goldsmith. Children: Elaine, Sandra Schnare, Jim; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 23 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Wiebe, John M., 80, Altona, Man., died June 28. Spouse: Anne Hiebert Wiebe. Parents: John and Margaret Martens Wiebe. Children: Cliff, Bernice, Marilyn Friesen; eight grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 3 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

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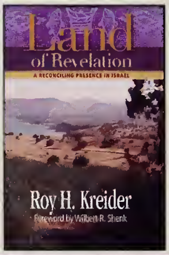
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Mennonite Community Church: Celebrate 50 years of sharing God's love in Fresno, Calif., Oct. 22-24, 2004. Activities include a dinner and stories from pastors and members past and present on Saturday and a Sunday service with breakfast, Sunday school, special worship and a potluck lunch. A new congregational history book is available for $25. To order a book or find out more about the celebration, call the church at 559-251-5703 or email mennocom@att.net.

Rocky Mountain Mennonite Relief Sale for MCC, Oct. 15-16, Fairgrounds, Rocky Ford, Colo. Festival of food, fun and fellowship: quilt auction, crafts, plants, woodwork, kids' activities (including service project). New: Fair trade "coffee with friends" booth. 1947 John Deere Model D tractor, serial number 167745. High Atmosphere Bluegrass Band performs Friday evening, 7:30. See www.rmmcsale.org or call 719-384-7914.

Mennonite Central Committee is accepting applications for the position of ***MCC Central States executive director.*** The director provides vision and oversight for all MCC programs in Central States.

Familiarity with MCC constituency, strong relational administrative skills and cultural competency required. Experience with budgeting, administration, Spanish language skills preferred. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply. Significant travel time within the United States.

Contact Charmayne Brubaker, 717-859-1151, cdb@mcc.org or your nearest MCC office for the full job description. Application review begins immediately. Position available Jan. 1, 2005, or sooner, if possible.

Reception in honor of Prof. Ray Gingerich, celebrating more than 25 years of teaching at Eastern Mennonite University. Saturday, Oct. 9, 3-5 p.m. at the Discipleship Center on the EMU campus. All former students, colleagues and friends welcome. Sponsored by the EMU Bible Department.

Norristown New Life, a 115-member, urban, multicultural, Spanish/English congregation, is seeking a half-time (2.5 days per week) ***bilingual Hispanic associate pastor*** to serve as a member of our pastoral leadership team.

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For more information, please contact Adamino Ortiz, Search Committee Chair, Nueva Vida Norristown New Life, 3 E. Marshall St., Norristown, PA 19401, email Adamino@fast.net or NNL3@juno.com.

***Executive director:* Bridge of Hope Lancaster and Chester Counties,** a Christian nonprofit organization serving homeless women with children, seeks dynamic individual to oversee the program, fund development, strategic planning, budget and manage staff of 12. Qualifications: Master's degree, three years management experience and proven fund-raising ability. Strong communication and computer technology skills necessary. Submit resumé to Nancy Sauder at bridge@sauderline.com or call 717-569-4279.

Gift and Thrift, Inc. in Harrisonburg, Va., seeks a full-time ***manager*** for a World of Good Thrift Shop and a part-time ***manager*** for Artisans' Hope. Experience in management and business is desirable. Responsibilities include demonstrating Christian principles, promoting the mission of MCC, training and supervising volunteers, and marketing. Full-time salary and benefits include health coverage and retirement plan. For more information call Glendon Blosser 540-434-0657.

Rosedale Bible College is seeking applicants for the position of ***president***. The ideal candidate will have a high view of Scripture, an advanced degree, administrative experience, a clear vision for the school and strong communication and public relations gifts, and must be fully supportive of the theological positions of Conservative Mennonite Conference. The position will be available July 1, 2005. Send resumé to Levi Sommers, 2950-B Central Ave., Canon City, CO 81212, or email lsommers@citystar.com.

Franconia Mennonite Church, located in Franconia, Pa., is seeking a talented, energetic individual to fill the position of ***music director*** and lead a congregation of over 735 members in our music ministry. This very important role will give leadership to all music areas within the church, including adult and children choirs, music planning for worship services and congregational singing. For more information or to request a detailed job description, please contact Keith Berger at 215-723-3220. Resumés may be sent to kberger@franconiamennonite.org.

Millersville Mennonite Church (Lancaster, Pa.) seeking youth pastor for half-time position on pastoral team. For further information reply to Search Committee, millersvillemennonite@paonline.com or call 717-872-2695.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.15 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available.

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Conrad Grebel University College

Conrad Grebel University College

ACADEMIC DEAN

Conrad Grebel University College, a Mennonite college on the campus of the University of Waterloo, is seeking a dynamic and energetic person to serve as **Academic Dean** beginning **July 1, 2005**. The Academic Dean is the chief academic officer of the College and a member of the administrative leadership team.

Conrad Grebel is the residential and teaching college of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. Its undergraduate academic program is fully integrated with the University of Waterloo and includes departments of Music and Peace and Conflict Studies as well as courses in Religious Studies, History, English, Sociology, Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Arts. The College also offers a graduate program in Theological Studies and is affiliated with the Toronto School of Theology.

Preference will be given to candidates who have established themselves as excellent teachers and scholars, have experience in academic leadership and administration, stand within the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition and are Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada.

For more information, please contact the President's Office at cgcpres@uwaterloo.ca. Applications or nominations, to be received by *October 18, 2004*, should be addressed to:

Dr. Henry Paetkau, President
Conrad Grebel University College
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NEEDED IN 2005:
MCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This person will lead Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and build understanding and support for its mission among an increasingly diverse constituency.

For a job description or application, please contact search committee chair Donella Clemens, PO Box 64439, Souderton, PA 18964; dmclemens@mindspring.com.

Application review begins Sept. 1, 2004, with a January 2005 appointment and a June 2005 start date.

In 2004, MCC budget was $63 million U.S., with 1,200 people serving in more than 50 countries.

How not to witness: God-talk at the Olympics

Gordon Houser

The 2004 Olympics, held Aug. 13-29 in Athens, Greece, celebrated peaceful competition among the world's best athletes. Set in the land of the Greek pantheon, they also featured instances of God-talk that didn't always pan out.

I watched as numerous U.S. athletes, particularly among the sprinters, interviewed after they won an event, said something like, "I want to give glory to God for giving me the strength to compete."

This expression of humility was refreshing, a counterpoint to more egoistical strutting or boasting that sometimes occurs. The interviewer quietly ignored them and went on to the next question.

But at times it got out of hand. For example, Andre Ward, the only U.S. boxer to win a gold medal, went on and on about winning the bout because God was with him.

I'm waiting for a TV interviewer to say something like this: "Could you please explain why your God intervenes in the affairs of the world to help you win a boxing match [or a race or whatever] but allows more than 30,000 children to die every day from malnutrition and preventable diseases?"

I understand these are athletes, often tired from just competing, but they are also aware of the media and know they will be interviewed. And some want to bear witness to their faith. There must be better ways.

Joanna Hayes (see Sept. 7 issue, page 7), a Christian with Mennonite connections who won the 100-meter hurdles, apparently tried (off camera) to comfort other runners who had lost. Michael Phelps, the most decorated athlete at these Games, winning six gold medals and two bronze in swimming, did not speak about his faith but won much admiration for giving up his spot on a relay team to another swimmer.

Such small, humane acts speak volumes. On the other hand, large, stupid acts also speak volumes. Here I'm referring to an incident on the last day of the Games, when Cornelius Horan, a defrocked priest from Ireland, rushed onto the course of the men's marathon and grabbed the lead runner, Vanderlei de Lima of Brazil, and shoved him into the curbside crowd. (De Lima eventually won the bronze.) Horan wore a red kilt, a green beret and matching knee-high socks, and a piece of paper on his back that read, "The Grand Prix Priest Israel Fulfillment of Prophecy Says the Bible." In July 2003, he wore a similar costume when he ran onto the track during the British Grand Prix, forcing racers to swerve around him.

This is an extreme case of a man who must be mentally ill. But God-talk is cheap when it ends up exalting ourselves and is not accompanied by acts of kindness and charity toward others.

FILMS

Vanity Fair (PG-13) is based on the sprawling novel by Thackeray, and the first half of the film includes the biting satire of that work. However, after the battle of Waterloo, the film loses its edge. It summarizes plot elements to a degree that weakens the drama. Becky Sharp, played well enough by Reese Witherspoon, is simply too nice. The satire of the English class system gives way to a superficial romance. The plight of women born without money or the right name is clearly portrayed, but the passion of the book against that injustice dissipates in the film.

VIDEOS

To End All Wars (R) would be considered outlandish were it not based on a true story. Allied prisoners at a Japanese POW camp on the border of Thailand and Burma in World War II suffer brutality and hardship. But a few, with Christian convictions, decide to treat their captors with respect rather than hatred. A gradual change occurs, with startling incidents of sacrificial heroism. This stunning film (rated R because of the violence it depicts) illustrates the power of Jesus' message to love our enemies.

BOOKS

God Is Not ... Religious, Nice, 'One of Us,' an American, a Capitalist, edited by D. Brent Laytham (Brazos Press, 2004, $14.99), contends that we cannot learn who God is until we are clear who God is not. Laytham writes, "The incessant chatter of God-talk in contemporary American culture is simply too trite, banal and pandering to raise our sights to the Source of all truth, beauty and goodness." The authors critique our tendency to make God into a religious, psychological, cultural, nationalistic or economic idol. Laytham then presents God as one, holy, catholic and apostolic.

Piano in the Vineyard by Jean Janzen (Good Books, 2004, $9.95) is the latest collection by the Mennonite poet whose work (including several from this book) has appeared in this magazine. Her poems are lyrical, lush, yet startling at times, as when she moves from a dead squirrel to the bones of martyrs in Münster, "the delicate metatarsals / of feet wildly dancing for New Jerusalem." She writes of nature and faith, and her poems encompass "Life and death as light as that, / wheeling between earth and heaven, then spilling over." Lovely.

FROM OUR READERS

Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry by P.W. Singer (Cornell University Press, 2004, $19.95) presents a paradigm shift in the understanding of the military that may be unlike any in our lifetime. A wide variety of traditional functions of the military are now being outsourced to private contractors, from supply to actual combat. Most of this privatization is below the radar of the media. No longer is military power concentrated in the hands of a national government, which makes them less important or powerful. It makes smaller states and rogue groups more dangerous. And this includes psychological warfare, deception, intelligence, electronic or cyber attacks. Firms such as Executive Outcomes, Saracen, MPRI, Sandline, Lifeguard and Alpha 5 have already turned the tide in conflicts in Uganda, Angola, Sierra Leone, Nicaragua and Bosnia. They don't always support political causes but often protect assets such as diamond mines or natural resources. The author includes 70 Web sites of these companies in the appendix. This book is dense with information and is important for anyone watching the military and following peace concerns.—*Brian D. Stucky, Goessel, Kan.*

Photo courtesy of Mennonite Historical Archives, Goshen, Ind.

MMA, P.O. Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527

It used to be let nothing go to waste *now it's* let nothing go to waist

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Everett J. Thomas

Blind spots

Lutherans still think Mennonites get it wrong when it comes to baptism—although the reason may be different today from the reason in 16th-century Europe, when some Anabaptists were martyred for repudiating infant baptism.

Recent interchurch discussions about baptism have revealed a persistent Mennonite blind spot: our tendency to believe that it is our discipleship that releases God's grace.

"Mennonite-Lutheran Talks Debate History," a report we published May 4, summarized the first interchurch conversations between Mennonite Church USA leaders and another Christian denomination. Thomas Finger, who addresses the issue of sacraments in this issue, provided some observations after the Mennonite-Lutheran discussions.

"[Lutherans] find that infant baptism, where the recipient is passive, can symbolize this grace," Finger wrote in May. "They tend to fear that Mennonites, by emphasizing active, conscious response, may obscure God's grace."

Many Mennonite congregations have baby dedication services to bless an infant or toddler. During this ritual, the congregation commits itself to nurturing faith in the child. In such a moment, does God's grace visit the child? Or is the ritual only about the commitment made by the congregation?

It is a form of discipleship to be vulnerable to other Christians and weigh their counsel when they say we are wrong.

"Mennonites … believe that God's grace does not become active in our lives unless we respond to it in some way and seek to live as Jesus taught," Finger says again (see page 9 in this issue).

If this is true—and nothing happens to the infant during a dedication service—why bother addressing the child at all? If we believe, as Finger says, that we do not receive God's grace until we respond, then the only real purpose of the baby dedication is for the congregation to respond with its commitment—an act that somehow allows God's grace to be poured out upon us but not the child.

The relationship between our actions and God's grace is important in other rituals as well. Several years ago I was confronted by this question in relation to Communion.

While working for the [now defunct] Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, some of us visited one afternoon with Ivan Kauffman, a former Mennonite who joined the Roman Catholic Church decades ago. Kauffman, a retired historian living in Washington, was describing why he must be Catholic. It centered around going to Mass every week. Communion was oxygen for his soul. In our discussions afterward, I learned that at times in the ancient Christian church, the bread and the wine were thought to have medicinal properties—people would be a bit healthier after partaking of the cup and the loaf.

Since that time, I have experienced Communion differently, and several memorable services mediated God's grace for me. The first was in Wichita, Kan., in 1995, when General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church delegates met together to decide about merger. Our very next act after the decision to unite was to have Communion together. I still have my little plastic cup and (a second) carefully preserved hard cracker. I also have a cup and cracker from the closing Communion service at the 1997 Mennonite World Conference in Calcutta; during that service I received a powerful sense of Christ's body transcendent above our differences in national origin, language and race.

Do we believe that God's grace is mediated to us only if we respond? I doubt it.

Many Mennonites today participate in anointing services and testify to the power and healing they receive through the touch of another person. Many of us sense God's grace flowing over us when the pastor's hands raise in benediction as a sending at the end of a worship service.

At the next baby dedication, consider whether God can move in the soul of that small child even without him or her responding. If we believe God's power is not limited by human action, then maybe the Lutherans are helping us see that we are not so clear-eyed about God's grace.

It is also a form of discipleship to be vulnerable to other Christians and to weigh their counsel when they say we are wrong. If we are, God's grace is also sufficient for such blind spots.—*ejt*

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October 5, 2004

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Religious zeal or Christian wisdom

Gilberto Flores serves as director of leadership development and denominational minister for Mennonite Church USA. He served 25 years as a pastor and church planter in Guatemala, Honduras and Texas.

I am disappointed by the religious noise that surrounds the current electoral process. Most disconcerting is the inference that Christians need to support the current course of U.S. politics because this is a Christian nation.

Gary DeMar, in his book *American Christian History*, quotes from a speech by President Woodrow Wilson: "America was born a Christian nation. America was born to exemplify that devotion to the elements of righteousness which are derived from revelations of Holy Scripture." By the tone and context in which the author cites these words, it becomes evident that this declaration is a Constantinian generalization, with ideological implications about what it means to be a Christian.

When religious vocabulary is used for partisan propaganda, although it sounds Christian, it is in essence a distorted sound that easily becomes an annoyance and an inopportune noise. Religious zeal mixed with politics produces an ideological mix that easily moves people to make decisions with implications that can be devastating.

Many examples in history testify to this. If we take into account that the reference point of this electoral process is the war, we can infer that the political religious fervor has as its purpose the defense and promotion of actions contrary to Scripture, such as, using an extreme comparison, promoting that the only point of view valid worldwide is to sustain that two eyes for one is a better rule than the eye for an eye rule that Jesus condemned.

How can a Christian, avoiding this noise we speak of, make a correct decision at the hour of voting? What are the interests that should move the conscience of the Christian disciple to vote responsibly? Do we understand that upon voting we are responsible for the decisions that those who govern us make? Are we clear that voting is not neutral because upon voting we are authorizing the actions and decision of those who govern us? How do we respond to these questions as Mennonites and Anabaptists who recognize the Lordship of Christ over our lives?

The electoral season is a good time to be prophetic about the true justice that comes from a commitment to the values of the reign of God. This is a propitious time to show the relevance of our Christian values in a society highly educated but that in some aspects shows itself capable of political manipulation.

Christian wisdom pushes us to be prophetic. This does not mean being loudmouthed, adding in this way more religious noise to the electoral environment. A prophetic voice for today begins with an appropriate analysis of the ethos this nation is modeling, as much within its own society as toward the world in general.

Another point of reference for the prophetic task consists of being conscious of the ethical implications of our political decisions. For a coherent Christian, the world is the geographic space for the mission of God, not a camp for a religious or ideological brawl in which the strongest imposes itself by whatever means available. Christian wisdom encourages us to offer hope and the opportunity of redemption.

The relevance of the Vision: Healing and Hope of Mennonite Church USA is a good point of reference to prevent the religious noise from pushing us to become like those who neither know the Lord nor respect the Lord's commandments.

I invite you to vote with this vision in your mind, and it may be that this is the help needed to decide with wisdom. God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world. TM

TheMennonite

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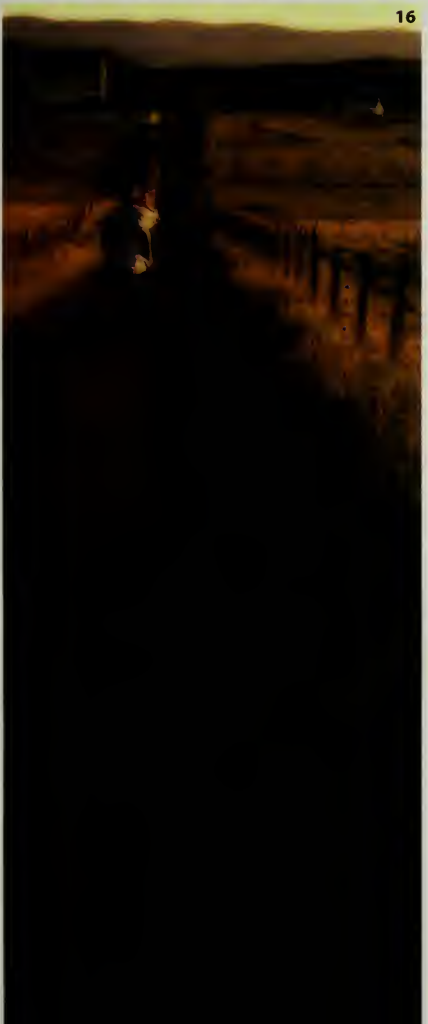

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Insurance only for the affluent

In 2002, Gulf States Mennonite Conference took an action that says: "We, the delegates of Gulf States Mennonite Conference, wish to express our strong disappointment with the development of a 'combined' mutual aid insurance company that will result in the exclusion of members of our conference. It is egregious to provide mutual aid to affluent Mennonite population centers while excluding lower-income minorities in less Mennonite populated areas. The majority of the members of Gulf States Mennonite Conference are minorities consisting of South Louisiana Cajuns, Hispanics, African Americans and Native Americans. We are saddened by this development and feel alienated from the larger church as a result. We pray for a time when rhetoric and reality are not so far removed from each other."

This action explains to a degree my strong feelings toward some of the leaders of the new Mennonite Church USA and the decisions they've made concerning property insurance. Fine southern states can no longer be members. We're told we're not profitable. So I can no longer sit at the same table with my northern friends and relatives.

Please answer the following: (1) Explain the meaning of "missional" and how it was applied when making the new insurance policies. (2) Is this the Anabaptist way of caring for one another? (3) Why hasn't this information been published in *The Mennonite*?

We in the South are disappointed and disgusted. We've been pushed to the back of the bus again. *—Elizabeth P. Geil, Gulfport, Miss.*

Editor's note: The earlier insurance plans were not official Mennonite Church or General Conference Mennonite Church programs. The successor agency, Mutual Aid Exchange (MAX), is not part of Mennonite Church USA, although many members of our denomination subscribe to these plans.

Political activism discouraged

Why is political activism on behalf of progressive political causes the only one avoided in this periodical and [one of] its predecessors, *Gospel Herald*? I've been reading denominational literature since 1987; political activism has always been discouraged when it comes from the left. But I see two letters in the Aug. 17 issue transparently in support of the reelection of the criminally rightist President Bush. Yet I'm not expecting any of the same high-minded, above-the-fray, anti-activist zealots out there to chastise these individuals for activism on behalf of the Republican Party.

It certainly is disorienting to be informed that the candidate described as "Christian," as opposed to his "anti-Christian" opponent, has expressed his Christianity by invading, occupying and torturing Iraqis who never posed any threat to us.

I long for the days when this denomination has courageous individuals like Michael Sattler who suffered the indignity of having his tongue amputated after stating that if he would fight for anyone it would be for the Turks—because Christians should know better. The Bush administration would be cutting off his tongue, and their minions corresponding with *The Mennonite* would be there to help in these distracted times.

Is it just me that believes that with the exception of several courageous individuals—such as John Drescher, Daryl Byler and Leo Hartshorn—the Mennonite peace position rumored to be derived from the teachings of Jesus has folded like a pack of cards during the last two years?*—Paul R. Schlitz Jr., Baltimore*

Vote for a one-issue president?

The disagreement among Mennonites on the election puzzles me (Readers Say, Sept. 7). Are we to be so naive as to vote for a one-issue president? I agree that abortion is wrong, but what about all the other issues our country faces?

As a people of peace how can we condone a preemptive strike on a country of 51 million people? How about the treatment of the poor in this country; the secrecy; hiding information from the people; running up the unreal deficit; favoring the rich supporters; favoring the drug companies; taking away the rights of American people with the Patriot Act; the squeezing of the middle class; making our former allies distrust and hate us. Our policies make more terrorists throughout the Middle East. Why not look at ways to understand why the terrorists are against us and the people of the world hate us?

We have to look at the big picture and look for Christlike actions, not Christ-professing words only.*—Marjorie Gautsche, Archbold, Ohio*

IN THIS ISSUE

The theme of this issue is the U.S. presidential election and what it means to be an Anabaptist in an American democracy (page 14). We offer some analysis of two presidential candidates and the trajectories each would take our country in relation to the economy (page 8), foreign relations (page 10) and the environment (page 12). We are also aware that many of our readers do not vote. A survey of U.S. subscribers (see page 24) provides opportunity for readers to respond why they do not vote; the postcard also provides opportunity for readers to say who they would vote for at this point. We will publish the results in the issue dated Nov. 2—Election Day. Mail the card by Oct. 15 to be included in the results.*—Editors*

Media omits bad news in Iraq

Contrary to Lorene Gable's letter (Readers Say, Aug. 17) that included the oft-quoted sentence, "Much good has happened in Iraq since the old regime was removed, but the mainstream will not report on it," I find a glaring omission by the media about the bad news. We have yet to hear about the many Iraqis who have died in this ill-advised war. Christian Peacemaker Teams reports that it is the women and children (both the born and the unborn) who suffer most.

Who will count all the suffering? One thousand-plus American GIs have died in the Iraq war. Are Iraqi casualties in the ten thousands or in the hundred thousands? Who can answer that question? I suggest we ask our news media to report that also. Besides having removed a bad, old regime in Iraq, we have demonstrated our own capacity for torture and abuse. This negates any good that could be credited to our presence there now.—*Helen R. Tieszen, Sioux Falls, S.D.*

Picking college presidents

I was disappointed to read Everett J. Thomas' editorial "Picking Presidents" (Sept. 7), which again raised the bugaboo of academic excellence. Are you suggesting that the goal of a church college should be less than excellence for Christ and the church? Do you want our editors, ministers and teachers in the church to have a less-than-excellent preparation in college? Do you want your medical doctor, nurse, lawyer, etc. to have a less-than-excellent education? Do you want our Christian social workers, counselors and public school teachers to get less than an excellent preparation when they come to a Mennonite college?

Let's stop disparaging the goal of academic excellence in our schools with words like "elitism." When I was raising the first funds to build Bethany Christian High School in Goshen, Ind., we used a slogan, "If it's Christian, it's got to be good!" Nothing but the best for the kingdom of Christ. —*C. Norman Kraus, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Call for prayer

I am writing about the need to pray. I ask that we earnestly pray that every heart that is humble before God's will be anointed with the spirit of prayer—that there would be such an outpouring of prayer as has not yet been. May the kingdom of darkness and workers of iniquity not prevail but be rebuked and bound with cords that cannot be broken. Also, pray that the windows of heaven be opened and that such light and truth and great understanding would be given to all the world—and especially upon our nation—that we would know to choose the better way.

God says in 2 Chronicles 7:14, "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."—*Gladys E. Harder, Mountain Lake, Minn.*

Tragic zeal

Thank you for publishing "Tragic Zeal" by Darrin W. Belousek (Sept. 7). I was impressed by his clear writing and persuasive arguments. I have already used quotes from the article in a sermon I will give in October and in a letter I e-mailed to a military friend. The news you carry is great but I keep my subscription to *The Mennonite* because of thought-provoking articles like this one. Keep up the good work of articulating our Anabaptist faith.—*Steve Carpenter, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Cults claim 'God's gladness'

What in the world is the Mennonite church coming to? Surely you know enough about Julian of Norwich that you would not publish an article like "God's Gladness" (Aug. 17). But you did.

The cults claim God's gladness. I live near many Mormons. They claim God's gladness. Many heretical churches claim God's gladness. That kind of promotion is truly disheartening and discouraging to many of us lifelong Mennonites.—*Frank Horst, Warden, Wash.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Over the past 20 years, Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT):

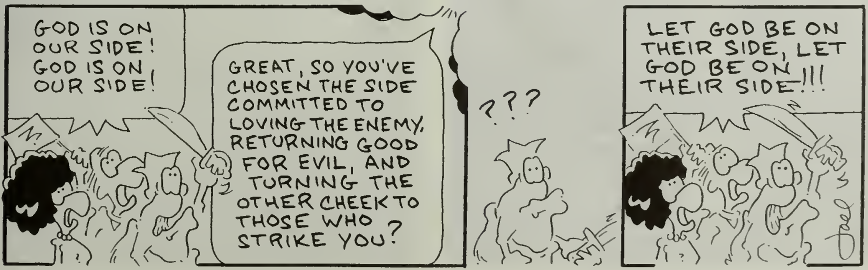
○ have helped in conflict situations (64%)

○ have not helped in conflict situations (20%)

○ Not sure (16 %)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


GOD IS ON OUR SIDE! GOD IS ON OUR SIDE!
GREAT, SO YOU'VE CHOSEN THE SIDE COMMITTED TO LOVING THE ENEMY, RETURNING GOOD FOR EVIL, AND TURNING THE OTHER CHEEK TO THOSE WHO STRIKE YOU?
???
LET GOD BE ON THEIR SIDE, LET GOD BE ON THEIR SIDE!!!
Joel

Correction: Walter Franz is the Native Ministries Canada director. The name was incorrect in the Sept. 7 issue, page 22.

IN BRIEF

Slavery is alive and flourishing

Despite the fact that no country legally permits it, slavery is not dead; it is just less visible, according to the *Christian Science Monitor,* Sept. 1. An estimated 27 million people are in bondage worldwide, many of them bonded laborers—especially in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal—who have given themselves over for debts they can never repay. Even in the United States there are between 52,000 and 87,000 slaves at any given time. The fastest growing form of slavery is human trafficking, transporting slaves across national boundaries; many of these are women who end up in the commercial sex trade. "Bondage can be compared to living in a prison or a mental institution," says Kevin Bales of Free the Slaves (www.freetheslaves.net).—*The Christian Century*

Number of non-religious increases

When asked to name their religion, 16 percent of American adults, or 34 million people, now decline to choose a church or denomination, up from less than 10 percent in the early 1990s. Nonidentifiers make up the third largest religion-defined group in the country, trailing only to Catholics (24 percent) and all varieties of Baptist (7 percent), according to a new report, "The Decline of Religious Identity in the United States."

Preheim named director of MCC Central States

AKRON, Pa.—Vern Preheim, a longtime Mennonite Central Committee administrator, has been appointed interim director of MCC Central States.

"He's got a long, long history with MCC," says Ron Mathies, MCC executive director. "He knows the constituency. He knows MCC in and out, and he brings a real church statesman and diplomat perspective to his work."

Preheim

A former executive secretary of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Preheim has served with MCC in Algeria, Congo and at the MCC offices in Akron. He was director of MCC's Europe, Middle East and Africa programs in the late 1960s and early 1970s and served as MCC's Asia director from the mid-70s until 1980, when he left to lead the GCMC.

From 1996 until he retired in 2002, Preheim was resource development coordinator for MCC Central States in North Newton, Kan. MCC Central States is one of the four regional offices that make up MCC U.S.—*MCC News Service*

Mennonite colleges increase enrollment

The five Mennonite Church USA colleges have reported their enrollment figures for this fall. Each shows an increase in some or all areas.

Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., has a record total enrollment of 1,513 students—undergraduate, seminary and graduate—compared with 1,436 last fall. Total undergraduate enrollment numbers 933 students, compared with 922 a year ago. Of that total, 228 are first-year students, up 18 over last fall.

Goshen (Ind.) College showed an enrollment of 908 students this fall, which includes an increase of 17 full-time enrollees over last year and a slight increase in total full-time equivalency, from 834 to 838 students.

Bluffton (Ohio) University's enrollment this fall is 1,191, an increase of 70 students from 2003, which was a previous record enrollment. This fall's student body includes 266 first-year students, 30 more than last year (the record was 263, in 2002), and 48 transfers from other colleges and universities. The total of new, traditional students both first-year and transfer students combined is 314. The previous record was 305 in 2002.

Hesston (Kan.) College's enrollment of 465 is the most in nine years and 19 more than a year ago. The number of full-time students increased to 411, compared with 394 last fall. Of the 465 students enrolled this fall, 260 (or 56 percent) are Mennonites.

Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., has an enrollment of 509, up from 470 last fall.

Meanwhile, Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, part of Mennonite Church Canada, has record enrollment this fall. As of mid-September, 442 students were registered at the main campus, 371 full-time, an 11 percent increase over last year. More than 1,200 students have registered for at least one course in conflict resolution or international development studies through Menno Simons College, a college of CMU affiliated with the University of Winnipeg, a 6 percent increase. And 91 full-time students are participating in Outtatown—CMU's program of international travel, service

Courtesy photo

Bag lady

Edna Shantz (left) could be called College Mennonite Church's "bag lady." At the Goshen congregation's monthly Mennonite Women work day, Shantz oversees the cutting out of 100 fabric rectangles for sewing into bags for Mennonite Central Committee school kits. By the following month she brings back the 100 sewn bags ready for other women to add cords for the drawstrings. Shantz has been sewing since she was a young child. She sees her sewing as a gift from God.—*Barbara Smucker*

Singing in the mosquito nets

A gathering of HIV-positive patients and their caregivers sin their greetings to a team bringing them mosquito nets, mattresses and blankets. Mennonite Central Committee funding helps a Ugandan group provide mosquito nets, a mattress a bedding for HIV/AIDS patients.

and learning—with sites in Guatemala, South Africa and Thailand.—*from reports by the colleges' news services*

Web site offers Mennonite analysis of media

HARRISONBURG, Va.—"Media Matters," a weekly analysis of movies, TV shows, music and other media from a Mennonite perspective, is up and running at Third Way Café, the Web site offering Mennonite history, beliefs and thought for the general public.

The regular reviewers include writers whose hobby or interest is keeping up with current trends in the media:

- Tom Price, marketing director for Mennonite Mission Network in Elkhart, Ind.;
- Jerry Holsopple, chair of communications department at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg and one of the original creators of Third Way Café;
- Michelle Davis, a recent graduate of College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va., now working in Washington;
- Steve Carpenter, resident of Harrisonburg;
- Gordon Houser, associate editor of *The Mennonite* in Newton, Kan.

Other writers will be included occasionally, and Media Matters also seeks reviews from students. Web users can post their own opinions about the particular film or program under review.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Mennonite poet wins poetry fellowship

NORTH NEWTON, KAN.—A young Mennonite poet has won one of the largest awards offered to aspiring writers in the United States.

Bartel

Nathan Bartel, a 2002 graduate of Bethel College in North Newton, has received the 2004 Ruth Lilly Poetry Fellowship, with Emily Moore of New York City. The $15,000 awards are intended to help recipients continue their study and writing of poetry.

Bartel grew up at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp near Divide, Colo., and is a student in the M.F.A. program at the University of Montana.

The Lilly Poetry Fellowships have been awarded annually since 1989 through a national competition. This year there were more than 150 applications.—*Bethel College News Service*

ar ye, hear ye

elsea Jackson (right) discusses the decision to get a cochlear
plant and what she can hear now with her parents, Carolene
d Bill Jackson. Deaf since she was about 18 months old, the
sston College sophomore's experience this year will be
hanced by the ability to hear, thanks to the implant she
eived this summer.

TourMagination responds to Jamaica recovery

WATERLOO, Ont.—In September, Hurricane Ivan caused extensive devastation of property and income for the people of Jamaica, who were already suffering from poverty.

Dave Worth will lead TourMagination's Service Tour to Jamaica Jan. 21-30, 2005. Worth has worked in Jamaica with Habitat for Humanity Canada and with Mennonite Central Committee. He has also led tours there for TourMagination. The group will work with the Mennonite Church of Jamaica, MCC and Habitat for Humanity to assist with hurricane recovery as part of the service component of this tour to Jamaica.

To register for this service tour with Dave Worth, call 800-565-0451 or 519-885-2522 or email office@tourmagination.com.—*Wilmer Martin*

Settlers attack two CPT workers in Hebron

HEBRON, West Bank—At about 7:15 a.m. on Sept. 29, settlers attacked Christian Peacemaker Teams members Chris Brown and Kim Lamberty as they accompanied children to school. The children, from the village of Tuba, have experienced harassment from settlers in the past as they walked to school in the village of al-Tuwani.

The five settlers, dressed in black and wearing masks, attacked Brown and Lamberty with a chain and bat. All the children escaped injury by running back to their homes.

The settlers pushed Brown to the ground, whipped him with a chain and kicked him in the chest, puncturing his lung. They kicked and beat Lamberty's legs. She is not able to walk because of an injury to her knee and has a broken arm. The settlers also stole Lamberty's waistpack, which held her passport, money and cellular phone. Lamberty and Brown were taken by ambulance to Soroka hospital in Beer Sheva for treatment.—*CPT*

IN BRIEF

AMBS appoints Prieb director of development

Garry Prieb began serving as director of development for Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary Sept. 7. Prieb served as executive secretary of AIMM from 1994 until June, when the organization was restructured. Prior to this he was a pastor and church planter in British Columbia and California. He grew up in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the son of career missionaries.—*AMBS News Service*

Jobs no guarantee for homeless

According to Religion News Service, a survey of homeless people has found that 40 percent said they were working in a full-time or regularly scheduled part-time job when they lost their homes. The Association of Gospel Rescue Missions reports that 80 percent of those surveyed had a high school education or better; 20 percent had some college; 7 percent were college graduates, and 2 percent had done post-graduate work or received a post-graduate degree. —*National Catholic Reporter*

Where Bush or Kerry may lead us

According to extensive research by Leland Harder and the late J. Howard Kauffman, most Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church members voted in the 1988 U.S. presidential election (from Church Member Profile, 1989; see box below). We believe the percentage of Mennonite Church USA members who will vote in this year's election will be even greater than 16 years ago. *The Mennonite* asked knowledgeable people to project the trajectories that the United States may take if George Bush is in office for the next four years and the trajectories that our country may take if John Kerry is in office the next four years. The three issues we selected are the economy, relations with other countries and the environment.—*Editors*

Economy

Business suits and fast-food aprons: an economic guide to the election

by Delmar King and Chad M. Horning

The U.S. President has less control over the business cycle than many voters think. At the margin, the President and Congress do have some ability to affect fiscal policy, but the policy instruments at their disposal are notoriously blunt. Nevertheless, the President's policies are important in determining how income is distributed and what kind of incentives or disincentives exist.

While the distribution of the nation's income may not play a large role in determining the business cycle, it is a core faith issue for many Mennonites. Just as we are stewards of what God has entrusted to us as individuals, the federal government is the steward of its citizens' tax dollars, which it has the charge to use wisely. As both candidates talk about their plans for prosperity as election day approaches, the question on voters' minds should perhaps more appropriately be, For whom? rather than, How much?

How Mennonites voted in 1988:

	MC	GCMC
George H.W. Bush	37%	54%
Michael Dukakis	18%	32%
Someone else	1%	2%
Did not vote	45%	13%

Political positions in 1988:

	MC	GCMC
Democratic Party	20%	27%
Republican Party	47%	50%
Independent or other	4%	5%

Source: Church Member Profile, 1989, by Leland Harder and J. Howard Kauffman.

With these policy limitations in mind, we address a few economic challenges the candidates can influence: health care, Social Security, the budget deficit, and labor and employment.

Health care: The most immediate challenge with respect to entitlement programs is the state of health care, including Medicare, Medicaid and private sector coverage. Neither candidate has laid out clear proposals for the future funding of Medicare-Medicaid, which faces severe financial stress in as few as four years, when the Baby Boomers begin to retire.

However, the candidates' positions on private-sector health care are much clearer. President Bush wants to expand the use of health savings accounts (HSAs), which, if successful, would provide incentive for individuals to be more cost conscious and could potentially restrain the growth of health-care spending while encouraging the expansion of private coverage. He also encourages the development of private networks to allow small businesses to gain greater bargaining power with providers.

By contrast, John Kerry proposes to offer tax credits encouraging small businesses to provide insurance to their employees. He also proposes to let private-sector employees participate in the federal employees' health-insurance plan.

Incentives that encourage prudent use of health care are an important element of the solution, but two major problems remaining unaddressed by either candidate are the lack of transparent pricing and patients' inability to assess the quality of service before agreeing to a treatment.

HSAs offer some positive incentives, but until consumers know what costs really are, these plans are only a partial solution. Under Kerry's plan, the use of tax credits will simply shift the cost of insurance from the private sector to the government without any kind of real cost containment.

Social Security: The major differences between the Bush and Kerry approaches to Social Security relate to whether individuals should be allowed to choose how to invest a portion of their Social Security withholdings. The current "pay as you go" plan relies on the withholdings of current taxpayers to fund Social Security payments to current retirees. This approach is only tenable if withholdings grow at least as fast as retirees' benefits, which may not be the case as the Baby Boomers retire. The Bush plan would have taxpayers allocate a portion of their FICA taxes to individual investment accounts to be drawn on later, rather than relying solely on current taxpayers to essentially pay for their parents' retirement.

Kerry argues that, under such a plan, individuals might make investment mistakes that could have dire consequences for their retirement savings. He also believes the current Social Security trust fund can be liquidated in an orderly fashion to meet the needs of the Baby Boomer generation, in which case Social Security would be essentially sound for the next few decades, while President Bush believes that liquidating the trust fund would require tax increases that would be politically unacceptable.

Budget deficit: President Bush has made major cuts in tax rates, especially for those taxpayers with high incomes, without much concern about the long-run budget deficit. By contrast, John Kerry proposes to increase the high-end tax brackets to near their previous levels, in an effort to reduce the long-term deficit and to offer greater health-care assistance to people in the lower tax brackets.

Another major budget issue receiving little mention so far is the cost of the war in Iraq. Congress has been making above-budget special appropriations, but after the election, defense spending must be addressed more directly to avoid the risk of setting off a round of future inflation. This is especially important in light of the rapidly escalating spending for security against terrorism and other initiatives undertaken during the last three years.

Labor and employment: In an appeal to working-class voters, Kerry favors increasing the minimum wage, rekindling the well-worn argument about whether a higher minimum wage really helps those it sets out to benefit. On the surface, a higher minimum wage appears to help low-wage workers as it compels employers to pay a higher rate to their lowest paid staff. However, if the minimum wage is set at a level higher than what could be obtained in an unfettered labor market, a surplus of workers (in other words, unemployment) could result because employers may try to make do with fewer, now more expensive, workers. The real world impact is hotly debated, so it comes down to whether one believes that government should intervene in the economy in an attempt to redistribute income, even if imperfectly.

So-called outsourcing and all its attendant rhetoric has been business news for years but has more recently become part of the average American armchair economist's vocabulary. The movement of jobs to regions where wages are lower, or labor arbitrage, has been going on for centuries. Only a few hundred years ago, the New World was the low-cost region supplying Europe with its cheap exports, while today North Americans enjoy the benefits of outsourcing to countries such as China in the form of a higher standard of living made possible by inexpensive imports.

Kerry has taken advantage of this discontent by proposing a plan to change the corporate tax code to eliminate the ability of U.S. companies to defer paying taxes on income earned abroad, and presumably to discourage companies from outsourcing. On the other hand, Bush is likely to continue to support U.S. business abroad by carefully advocating for fair treatment of U.S. exporters even as he protects domestic producers in competition with lower-cost foreign producers. In short, neither candidate has the clout or the will to change how international trade is conducted.

In sum, neither candidate appears to come to the election season with a grand economic plan, though each more or less aligns himself with his party's traditional economic views: Bush, with his pro-business, mostly hands-off policies, and Kerry, slightly more willing to advocate intervention when the market economy fails in distributing income fairly. In the end, the U.S. and global economic cycles are bigger than any one person, even the U.S. President, has the capacity to change. ■

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Delmar King is fixed-income investment manager at MMA and a member of College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. Chad M. Horning is senior equity investment manager at MMA and a member of Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Foreign relations

by J. Daryl Byler

In their own words: Bush and Kerry on U.S. foreign policy

What differences will we see in U.S. foreign policy if President George W. Bush serves a second term or if Sen. John F. Kerry is elected in 2004? A helpful starting place is to look at what each has said and done in the past and what they say they will do if elected president in 2004.

It is humbling to propose trajectories for each candidate because it is impossible to predict what global events will transpire in the next four years. Regardless of what the candidates promise now, realities can change quickly.

This is a bit like comparing apples and oranges. Bush has served nearly a full term as president, building a record that can be measured against his promises. Kerry has made promises about what he would do as president, but because the U.S. Senate has a limited role in shaping foreign policy, his record is not as clear.

It is humbling to propose trajectories for each candidate because it is impossible to predict what global events will transpire in the next four years. Regardless of what the candidates promise now, realities can change quickly. For example, in 2000, candidate George W. Bush called for a more humble U.S. foreign policy and opposed nation building. But after Sept. 11, 2001, President Bush has supported an aggressive global war on terror and ambitious nation-building efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Using their own words, this article looks at each candidate's overarching foreign policy framework, and specifically at how they will handle the situations in Iraq, Israel-Palestine and Iran.

Foreign policy framework: Speaking at the National Cathedral in Washington several days after the terrible attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, President Bush said: "Americans do not yet have the distance of history. But our responsibility to history is already clear: to answer these attacks and rid the world of evil."

This "war on terror" has become President Bush's domestic and foreign policy framework, with dramatic impact on U.S. priorities and global relationships during the past three years. The president has beefed up U.S. military spending to a level where the United States now spends as much as the rest of the world combined. With dominant military superiority, the United States quickly overthrew the governments of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003, respectively.

President Bush's reelection Web site cites three pillars for his foreign policy and national security strategy: (1) defending the peace "by opposing and preventing violence by terrorists and outlaw regimes;" (2) preserving the peace "by fostering an era of good relations among the world's great powers" and (3) extending the peace "by seeking to extend the benefits of freedom and prosperity across the globe."

In a major address to the Council on Foreign Relations in December 2003, Sen. Kerry charged that President Bush has "abandoned the fundamental tenets that have guided our [U.S.] foreign policy for more than half a century: belief in collective security and alliances, respect for international institutions and international law, multilateral engagement and the use of force not as a first option but truly as a last resort." In a later speech, Kerry said, "Our military strength may be at an all-time high, but our moral authority around the world is at an all-time low."

By contrast, Sen. Kerry portrays himself as a president who would work multilaterally and restore the U.S. image in the world. "I will always understand," says Kerry, "that even the only superpower on earth cannot succeed without cooperation and compromise with our friends and allies." He says that "Americans deserve a principled diplomacy … backed by undoubted military might."

The issues—Iraq: President Bush outlined his five-point plan for Iraq in a speech May 24. First, he promised to transfer sovereignty to an interim Iraq government by June 30. He kept this promise. Second, he made a commitment to "help establish the stability and security that democracy requires" and pledged to keep the current U.S. troop level in Iraq (nearly 140,000) as long as necessary. Third, he promised to help rebuild Iraq's infrastructure. Fourth, he promised to enlist additional support from other countries. And finally, he called for free national elections in Iraq by January 2005.

Senator Kerry voted in favor of the U.S. military intervention in Iraq but later said that "the way the president went to war [without U.N. backing] is a mistake." Now that U.S. troops are in Iraq, Sen. Kerry states, "We cannot fail. ... And if it requires more troops in order to create the stability that eliminates the chaos ... that's what you have to do." He has promised to move quickly to internationalize the effort in Iraq. He says he would call on NATO to take control of Iraq's border security; urge that the U.N. Security Council appoint an international High Commissioner to oversee Iraq's reconstruction and organize the political transition to Iraqi sovereignty; and launch a massive effort to build an Iraqi security force. He promises to bring home large numbers of U.S. troops by the end of his first term.

Israel-Palestine: In June 2002, President Bush announced a "road map" for peace between Israelis and Palestinians. He was the first U.S. president to call for a Palestinian state and says that his vision is "two states, living side by side in peace and security." But some Middle East analysts say that the president—who felt the Clinton administration was too involved in the details of the peace process—has not invested enough energy and even-handed pressure to move this dream toward reality. For example, Bush has shunned Palestinian President Arafat for failing to eschew violence but has done little to insist that Israel halt the provocative construction of a separation barrier and settlements on Palestinian land. And while promising that the United States "will not prejudice the final status negotiations" between Israelis and Palestinians, President Bush ignited an outcry among Palestinians in April when he agreed with Israeli Prime Minister Sharon that Palestinian refugees should not expect to settle in Israel and that Israel would be able to keep some of its West Bank settlements—two key bargaining points in the eyes of most Palestinians.

Sen. Kerry vows he "will never force Israel to make concessions that cost or compromise any of Israel's security." He supports the road map and fully concurs with President Bush's assurances to Prime Minister Sharon. However, he says President Bush is "completely disengaged" from the peace process and that the road map will only be viable if "U.S. engagement in this process is active, constant and at the highest levels." Kerry promises to appoint a presidential ambassador to the peace process. "American engagement and successful mediation are not only essential to peace in this war-torn area but also critical to the success of our own efforts in the war against terrorism," says Kerry. He, too, supports Israel's security barrier as "a legitimate act of self defense." To date, Kerry has not cosponsored a Senate resolution that condemns "the decision of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the security fence" and urges "no further action by the United Nations to delay or prevent the construction of the security fence."

Iran: Iran could be another hot spot in the next four years. The U.S. House of Representatives has already voted 376 to 3 to authorize the use of "all appropriate means" to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

While President Bush has told reporters "the development of a nuclear weapon in Iran is intolerable," he has pledged to work with European nations to address in the U.N. Security Council Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Sen. Kerry says that "as president, I will be prepared early on to explore areas of mutual interest with Iran, just as I was prepared to normalize relations with Vietnam a decade ago."

Summary: With regard to U.S. policy in the Middle East, there seem to be few substantive differences between President Bush and Senator Kerry. Furthermore, other than Sen. Kerry's call for developing energy independence, neither candidate seems inclined to breach the sensitive topic of the reasons behind the terrorist attacks—preferring instead to focus on improving military strength and intelligence.

Perhaps the key issue with regard to U.S. foreign policy in the next four years will be the U.S. president's ability to build strong relationships around the world. By going to war in Iraq preemptively and without a clear endorsement by the U.N. Security Council, the Bush administration took a beating in world opinion. An Associated Press poll earlier this year showed that large majorities among major U.S. allies still have a negative view of President Bush. Will he be able to rebuild these damaged relationships? And would Sen. Kerry be viewed any differently?

Regardless of who is elected president in November, Anabaptists—through Mennonite World Conference and growing ecumenical relationships—will do well to model a "foreign policy" that acts justly, listens carefully, celebrates diversity, embraces our common humanity and seeks the well-being of all God's children. And we will do well to pray for and call upon the president and all global leaders to move toward a similar vision.

Anabaptists— ...will do well to model a "foreign policy" that acts justly, listens carefully, celebrates diversity, embraces our common humanity and seeks the well-being of all God's children.

J. Daryl Byler is director of the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office.

Environment

Environmental issues are complex

by Lora Steiner

In 2001, the authors of *Environmental Values in American Culture* conducted a poll that revealed that many Americans agreed with the statement, "Because God created the world, it's wrong to abuse it." Although the environmental movement has generally been seen as partisan and left-of-center, recently more Christians, crossing political and religious affiliations, have become involved. Organizations such as A Rocha, the Evangelical Environmental Network and the National Council of Churches' ecojustice program have fostered diverse participation, but environmental issues remain controversial in the church.

The environment is rarely a decisive factor in elections, yet most Americans say they favor a cleaner and greener environment. Politicians—including President George W. Bush and Sen. John Kerry—are no different.

President Bush—whose Crawford Ranch has been often praised for its use of energy-smart technology, including solar energy and geothermal heating and cooling—has been criticized throughout his term by many environmental groups. His campaign says he's committed to improving air quality, cleaning up hazardous sites, promoting land conservation and funding for research on global climate change issues. He has generally endorsed policies that allow coal and oil to be used more cleanly.

> The environment is rarely a decisive factor in elections, yet most Americans say they favor a cleaner and greener environment.

However, critics (including state and local governments) question the intentions of the Bush administration. When President Bush announced his "Clear Skies Initiative" in 2003, intended to improve air quality, more than a dozen states filed suit to block the changes. One of the provisions to which they objected would have allowed plants and refineries to update their facilities without modernizing their pollution controls, something already required by law under the 1970 Clean Air Act.

Bush seems unconcerned by charges from critics. He says the quality of the United States' land, air and water has improved under his administration. On Earth Day, President Bush pledged to increase the acreage set aside for wetlands.

But if anything is certain, it's that Bush's environmental record is contentious. It has united the U.S. environmental movement against him. Environmentalists insist that his administration has been rolling back 30 years of environmental regulations. They point to the complexities and subtleties sometimes missed in the larger picture, noting that the number of toxic sites being cleaned up around the United States has dropped every year Bush has been in office.

Jim Ball, director of the Evangelical Environmental Network, says one positive change in policy since 2001 is the Bush Administration's plan to limit emissions from off-road diesel, announced earlier this year.

"The regulations for large off-road diesel engines will have a significant impact on improving air quality and represent the best effort on protecting God's creation," he says. "Unfortunately there are not other examples to highlight."

John Kerry's record has been lauded by numerous environmental groups. His involvement in environmental issues dates back to 1970, when he helped organize Massachusetts' first Earth Day.

Environmental groups say his Senate voting record merits support. Kerry has cosponsored legislation covering everything from reducing acid rain to toxic waste cleanups to reducing pesticide use in schools. His votes have supported increased funding for renewable energy and tax incentives for consumers who also want to support energy conservation through the purchase of hybrid vehicles.

Kerry also supports increased funding for environmental enforcement and significant increases in fuel economy standards. He has voiced support for increasing the gas tax. He sees an increase in the production of renewable energy as the way to decrease U.S. dependence on foreign oil.

Kerry has also been an ardent supporter of the

DesignPics, Inc.

environmental justice movement, which addresses the disproportionate amount of air and water pollution borne by communities of color and low-income communities.

While critics have been much quieter about Kerry's record, they raised a few concerns earlier this year when Kerry only offered conditional support for a controversial off-shore wind farm in Massachusetts. He said he was awaiting the results of an environmental impact study, but some were skeptical when he didn't fully support a renewable energy initiative in his own state.

Environmental issues are complex because the questions surrounding them aren't merely about ecology but tied to politics, the economy and religion. They're also connected to expectations about how the world ought to be, our security and comfort and what resources we assume will be around.

Christian ecologist Max Terman, acknowledging "there are real differences among well-meaning people about governmental policies needed to address environmental problems," offers some principles for evaluating government policies. He suggests that governments promote energy efficiency conservation, encourage renewable and alternate energy, preserve habitat and control the amount of pollution that enters the atmosphere.

Environmental issues are complex because the questions surrounding them aren't merely about ecology but tied to politics, the economy and religion.

Terman also points out that being an informed voter isn't enough. Regardless of who wins in November, Americans must continue to hold the president accountable for promises made prior to the election.

"Governmental action," he notes, "is only as good as the involvement of the people." TM

Lora Steiner is a legislative assistant in the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office and attends Community House Church in Washington.

Correction: "CPT Turns 20" (Sept. 7, page 12) says that CPT held its first Christian Peacemaker Corps training in 1992. It should have read 1993.

Anabaptist faith and

As pacifists and as Americans we have a responsibility

by Ted Grimsrud

Many of us have heard a comment like this: Aren't you Mennonites being parasites on society? You say you won't fight, but you're happy to have nonpacifists fight for you. You won't be in the police force but you'll quickly call a cop to protect your property. What right do you have to criticize those who take up arms?

One response is to say that we Mennonites happily pay our taxes, so we're not really parasites. We do appreciate the work police do and the sacrifices soldiers make to keep the United States free, but we simply understand our special vocation to be that of pacifism (implying that we have nothing to say about the choices those who don't have that vocation might make).

This sort of reasoning has come to be called "two-kingdom" theology, the idea that there is one type of ethics for those within Christ's kingdom and a second kind of ethics for the "world."

Anabaptists understood they were not protecting their own spot in the world but seeking to help heal the nations, to transform the fate of the kings of the earth.

A recent version of the two-kingdom position has talked in terms of a "first language" and "second language" for pacifist Christians. The "first language" is our Jesus-centered, pacifist language; the "second language" is the language of public policy, of the "real world" outside the church. Part of the value of focusing on our "first language" is that it enables us to retain our pacifism even in the face of wars that are justifiable.

That is, if there are wars that cannot be rejected on pragmatic, humanitarian grounds, we would likely have to support them if we were relying on second-language reasons for our pacifism. But if we are clear on our first language (that is, that Jesus calls upon those of us who have decided to follow him to love our enemies no matter what), then we will still have a basis for being pacifists.

This approach raises questions for me. I want to mention four, then reflect a bit more on each.

First, does this two-kingdom understanding not represent too narrow a view of God and of the relevance of Jesus' way that is, indeed, meant for the entire world?

Second, were not the original Anabaptists of the 16th century, our spiritual forebears, operating according to different assumptions, that got them into trouble with the governments of their day?

Third, does not the word from Jeremiah 29:7 to seek the welfare of the city where we find ourselves point to something more than the self-imposed withdrawal implied in two-kingdom theology?

And finally, today more than ever people from around the world are calling upon Americans who believe in peace and genuine democracy for help. They ask us to use the opportunities we have to challenge our government's policy of empire and world domination. Does two-kingdom theology allow us to do this?

The God of the whole world: The first question is most basic. The Bible portrays God as the God of the whole world, assuming that the core teachings God directs toward God's people do apply to the entire world.

We see one expression of this in the confession that begins several New Testament books: Jesus was with God in the making of the world. John says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being" (John 1:1, 3).

These statements tell us that Jesus cares about the whole world and does not break things up into two kingdoms. As well, the world is created such that Jesus' way works for everyone. The Jesus who participated in the creation of "all things" does not support the idea that certain values only work for Christians.

Jesus' way is the beginning of all things (John 1), and Jesus' way is the completion of all things (Revelation 21–22). For this time in between, those who trust in God are meant to be agents in witnessing to that completion. The healing of the nations and the healing of kings of the earth promised in Revelation at least in part happens due to the challenge they receive from followers of the Lamb to follow his way.

The witness in Revelation reflects a commitment from Lamb-followers to take his message of peace into the entire world.

Great hostility: This is precisely what the Anabaptists in the 16th century sought to do. Just about all Anabaptists were treated with great hostil-

American democracy

elp bring healing to the world.

ity by the states and state churches wherever they were. Why were thousands put to death and many more imprisoned or driven into exile?

The Anabaptists sought to be part of churches that were free from state control. Most of the Anabaptists refused to take part in the state's wars. The Anabaptists sought self-determination, to decide for themselves how best to live faithfully. And they tried to embody an alternative type of economics, based on sharing and living with simplicity.

They did not do these things in the privacy of their enclaves. They did them publicly, seeking an impact on their entire culture. Like the followers of the Lamb in Revelation, the Anabaptists understood they were not protecting their own spot in the world but seeking to help heal the nations, to help transform the fate of the kings of the earth.

To put it in Jeremiah's terms, they were seeking to serve the welfare of the city where they found themselves. However, they understood this welfare not in the terms of how the powers-that-be in their culture defined it but how Jesus defined it.

A major transition: Jeremiah's prophecies signal a major transition in ancient Israel. The key event in the time of Jeremiah was the destruction of the ancient Israelite nation-state. The experiment of linking the faith community with the state ended in failure. Israel's kings went the way of the nations, as Samuel had warned, seeking wealth and power over faithfulness to God's law.

Jeremiah proclaims, Yes we have lost our king and we have lost our temple, but this does not mean God's work in the world is ended. God has not been destroyed with the king and temple; God continues to live and seek the world's healing. From now on God will work through a community free from state control and that crosses the boundary lines of nation states. Seek the welfare of each society, wherever you find yourselves.

Jeremiah's word makes two points that must be held together: First, we are to seek the well-being of the whole society of which we are part. We should not focus only on our community in relation to the wider community. Second, the welfare we seek is not to be determined by the rulers but by what we know to be God's will for peace and justice for all peoples. This is not a call for blind patriotism but for discerning participation.

Two Americas: Finally, as Americans we have a responsibility toward the rest of the world that two-kingdom theology minimizes. We have to do this with two Americas. One is the America of participatory democracy, the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. This America has provided a safe home for descendants of Anabaptists after generations of persecution in Europe. This America allows us to speak out, vote and do public service.

However, we must not minimize the second America of conquest, of being the world's only superpower. This America engaged in 159 "interventionist acts" in which military force was used or threatened between 1787 and 1941, plus several declared wars—and who knows how many interventionist acts since 1941.

As a pacifist I believe all Americans should be pacifists, that none of us needs a military and that policing is possible without violence.

Because of the first America we have the opportunity to resist the second America. Because of the first America we may seek the welfare of this society by challenging the practices of the second America—and hope for at least partial success.

As a pacifist I believe all Americans should be pacifists, that none of us needs a military and that policing is possible without violence. That not everyone agrees with me does not make me a parasite for seeking to make the case for my convictions, and neither do my efforts to live consistently with my convictions.

Ted Grimsrud teaches theology and peace studies at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., and is a member of Shalom Mennonite Congregation in Harrisonburg and an ordained minister in Virginia Mennonite Conference.

ArtToday, Inc.

Neighbors' hayfields at dusk

by Joanne Lehman

For you, my neighbors, it may look like disaster—
you waited compassionately

for the young to fledge, but then it rains. The hay cut,
not even wind rowed yet, and everything soaked,

silvery and pale on the damp ground.
At dusk I walk in the road between your two hayfields,

and in the emptiness between one breath and the next
I see a redwing blackbird up on a wire

coach her chick to lift off and fly. In the distance,
a whole choir of them rise in unison, their red stoles

across solemn shoulders. My heart rests with theirs
on the first damp cutting. And how yesterday I ached

to join the barn swallows
as they dipped into the uncut grass, swooping

and rising, their forked tails dark
against their bellies, blue-black backs

arching toward the vaulted sky, the reservoir
of all that matters. Out here, day after day

my worship is fashioned out of this breath
taken in on the road between your two fields

where everything is damp and rejoicing, waiting
in anticipation for the sun to mount the high altar,

dry hay by the end of the week; fireflies
by the end of the month.

Joanne Lehman lives in Apple Creek, Ohio, and is a member of Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church. This poem first appeared in the Spring 2001 issue of Farming Magazine.

Prayers before the election

J. Robert Charles is a member of Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

As the Nov. 2 national elections draw near, I've been thinking again of how to put into practice the guidance Paul offered Timothy long ago, when he urged "that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority" (1 Timothy 2:1, NIV).

Yes, this counsel came at a time when rulers carried on with a sense of divine right. And while the scriptural principle that we are to be subject to those in authority remains true, much has changed between rulers and ruled since Paul's day. As citizens in a republic, today we have a role in choosing those to whom we will be subject under God.

How then to carry out the spirit of Paul's command as we prepare to elect those who will exercise authority over us? Here is how my prayers have been going.

Thanksgiving comes first. I give thanks to God that I live in a country whose leaders are chosen through regular democratic elections, where political parties contend for power, where we trust "time, discussion and the ballot box" (Abraham Lincoln) to adjust our public affairs. However flawed or messy, it sure beats authoritarian rule and change of regime by military coup.

Unchecked power gets us into big fiscal and foreign trouble.

True, Mennonites disagree on whether to exercise our right to vote, and we certainly are not of one mind on which candidates to support. If we resemble broader U.S. voting patterns, a few of us will vote from a set of clear principles—whether drawn up by the Moral Majority or the National Council of Churches. Nearly half will vote what seems best for our wallets, another quarter on whether the times seem good or bad and a fifth for no particular reason at all.

It has been said that nothing keeps faith in government more than the hope that in the next election we can turn out the crooks. Thanks to elections, it is much less easy, though still not impossible, to fool all the people all the time.

Whether or not we Mennonites go to the polls, I am grateful to God to live in a country that chooses its leaders through voting and thus holds them accountable for their actions. Many people in other countries wish they could vote in our elections for, as one Canadian commentator recently put it, "the Oval Office is a Global Office."

My second prayer is a request about process. I pray that the presidential election will be decided by the majority of voters and electors in the 50 states, not by a majority of justices on the Supreme Court.

The unusual—to put it mildly—way in which the 2000 Florida, and with it the national, election was decided tainted its result, both in this country and around the world. Whether what happened was timely "judicial activism" or a brazen maneuver to deny Floridians the right to have their votes counted fairly, I pray it doesn't come close to happening again. The presence of election monitors from other countries may help ensure that it won't.

My final election prayer is an intercession about its outcome. For the good of our country, I intercede with God for a divided government in Washington, with no one party holding power in both houses of Congress and the White House.

Our federal government best serves the welfare of our country when it is mired in partisan bickering—and thus requires compromise and bipartisan action on budgets and bombs. Unchecked power, whether in Republican or Democratic hands, whether of liberal or conservative hue, gets us into big fiscal and foreign trouble.

I've seen this happen twice in my lifetime. In the 1960s, with Democrats running the show, spending increased, the United States got caught in an unwinnable war in Vietnam and, with no tax hikes to pay for all this, significant budget deficits developed.

Since 2000, with Republicans holding sway, spending has gone through the roof, we are engaged in another ill-advised foreign military adventure and, after massive tax cuts, we face "budgets of mass destruction" as far as the eye can see.

As we go to the polls and face a choice between two major parties, I pray that God somehow allows us as a country to find a third way—to choose both. This is no time for getting carried away or beating around the bush: I'll take a divided government any way that God can serve it up. TM

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **The greatest job**—Ryan Ahlgrim
- **The oral church and preaching**—Jonathan Larson
- **Calvary Community Church expands its borders** —Laurie L. Oswald

Lancaster Conference joins denomination

Congregations to choose their level of participation in Mennonite Church USA

J. Lorne Peachey

Head usher Dale Leaman collects ballots at the Lancaster Mennonite Conference's fall assembly, held Sept. 17 at Weaverland Mennonite Church. LMC staff member Alonna Gautsche Sprunger is at front right.

While the affirmation was by no means a landslide, the largest Mennonite area conference in the United States has decided it will be a part of Mennonite Church USA.

With a positive vote of 69.5 percent, ordained and licensed conference leaders meeting at Weaverland Mennonite Church on Sept. 17 ratified a recommendation from the bishop board that Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference become a member of the denomination. A 66.6 percent margin was needed for the recommendation to pass.

The recommendation, called an "invitational model," made provision for congregations to decide what level of participation they want in the denomination: full participation, uncertain at this point with decision to come later, no participation.

But because membership in Mennonite Church USA is possible only through an area conference, the recommendation called for Lancaster to become "a member (participating) conference" in the denomination. While the bishop board had passed the recommendation by an 80 percent vote earlier this year, not all credentialed leaders agreed with them. Out of 465 ballots mailed individually to each licensed and ordained person in the conference, close to 100 chose not to return their ballots. About 100 were returned by mail and 271 were turned in at the Weaverland meeting, Lancaster's fall Leadership Assembly.

Under Lancaster polity, credentialed leaders have the final say in conference decisions.

"I'm disappointed that there wasn't a stronger affirmation for the recommendation," moderator Keith Weaver said afterward. "The difference between the bishop board vote and that of the credentialed leaders shows just how diverse we are as a conference.

"But I'm pleased that we can put this question behind us and move forward. There is growing energy among us for moving on with the mission of the church. We can now focus our energies on our shared mission."

"We've been on this journey quite a number of years," assistant moderator Carl Horning told the leadership assembly in reviewing Lancaster's work on the question of denominational affiliation.

While the work included having members on the committees overseeing the merger of the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church, activity was particularly intense in the past 18 months as the bishops held a series of three meetings in each of 22 clusters throughout the conference to discuss whether or not to join Mennonite Church USA.

"There has been more prayer about this in our conference than in relation to any other question," Weaver told the assembly. "The prayers of God's people have carried us to this point; the prayers of God's people will take us into the future."
—J. Lorne Peachey

> There has been more prayer about this in our conference than … any other question.
> —Keith Weaver

Franklin Conference joins Mennonite Church USA

On Sept. 21, Franklin Mennonite Conference voted to join Mennonite Church USA with 71.6 percent in favor. A two-thirds majority was needed. Franklin has 14 congregations, and all participated; those voting included both lay members and leaders with ministerial credentials. The vote was held at Marion Mennonite Church in Chambersburg, Pa. Franklin Conference congregations have approximately 1,200 members.

"We would have wished for a little stronger support," said conference minister Darrell Baer, "but there was still a sizable group that thought we should not join."

The 513-member North Central Mennonite Conference, with offices in Exeland, Wis., is now the only area conference to hold provisional membership status in the new Mennonite Church USA denomination.*—Everett J. Thomas*

Executive Board plans for Charlotte 2005

Debates whether to address government on health care, sells Mennonite Press

> I believe that when we get here next summer, we will have no provisional conferences and no one will have dropped out … two years early.
> —Jim Schrag

Meeting near the site of next summer's Mennonite Church USA Delegate Assembly, members of the Executive Board were anticipating Charlotte (N.C.) 2005 but also remembering some things the delegates said at Atlanta 2003.

Most of the worrying was about how delegates would respond to a call for the denomination to address the U.S. government—a key point in a statement on health-care access that will be the only resolution placed before the delegates.

In 2003, delegates adopted a resolution on abortion that did not call for the church to address the government—a point that caused considerable disagreement. The statement says, "Legislation is using the government to force others to comply with our Christian standards, something our forebears clearly rejected," although an amendment to remove such language from the resolution was narrowly defeated in 2003.

"This is a particularly critical issue as we bring the health-care access resolution to Charlotte," said board member Janeen Bertsche Johnson. "The perception is that we have different standards for different issues."

Former moderator Ervin Stutzman, who led the Atlanta 2003 discussion on the abortion resolution, agreed and said, "We lost integrity in the sight of some people. Is there something we can do now?"

The Executive Board will have an opportunity to do something about the issue in January 2005. Last month, Executive Board staff sent a draft of the resolution to all Mennonite Church USA congregations and is gathering feedback through the fall. At their next meeting, the Executive Board will look at a revised statement and then decide how to frame the resolution for the delegate workbook.

Although there will be only one resolution for adoption, several other significant actions will be on the agenda for Charlotte 2005 delegates. Mennonite Church USA executive director James Schrag said that one of the first proposals will be to accept a new area conference—called Mountain States Mennonite Conference—into Mennonite Church USA. All 16 congregations in the current Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference along with six congregations holding either single or dual membership in Western District Conference recently voted to form the new conference (see "Mountain States Conference Proposed," Aug. 3).

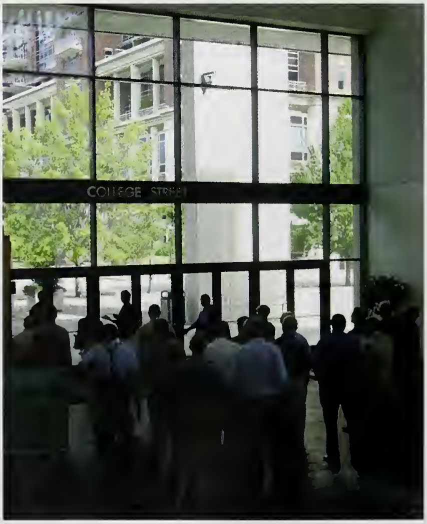
Another significant part of the Charlotte 2005 experience will be the clarity emerging about who will be members of Mennonite Church USA. That clarity increased for the Executive Board during its meeting when it received word that Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference had voted earlier in the day to become a permanent member (see page 19).

"I believe that when we get here next summer," said Schrag, "we will have no provisional conferences and no one will have dropped out … two years early."

Conferences that currently hold provisional membership have until 2007 to become permanent members of Mennonite Church USA.

The board got clarity on financial issues as well. Through a financial audit of its fiscal year that ended Jan. 31, the board learned its assets had increased 16 percent—or $310,000—over the previous year. However, the board also learned that its share of a nearly $500,000 health insurance deficit is $170,000. Executive Board staff are provided health insurance through a self-funded health insurance plan that includes Mennonite Mission Network and several other agencies.

Jim Harder, who chairs the board's resources committee, also announced that the Executive Board had received a fair offer for its 51 percent ownership in Mennonite Press—a commercial printing operation in Newton, Kan., that is not affiliated with Mennonite Publishing Network. Proceeds from the sale will go to the three church agencies (or their successors) that helped fund the original investment. Those agencies are Mennonite Mission Network, the successor agency to Commission on Overseas Mission and Commission on Home Ministries, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and the Executive Board, successor to the General Conference Mennonite Church General Board.—*Everett J. Thomas*



Everett Thomas

Charlotte tour

Jorge Vallejos, who directs the office of convention planning for Mennonite Church USA, led Executive Board members on a tour of the convention center in Charlotte, N.C., on Sept. 18. The convention center will be the site of next summer's gathering for Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada.

Goshen College bids farewell to president

Showalter spent 10,311 days at the college over 28 years as professor, president.

As students, faculty, staff, community and church leaders, benefactors and alumni filled Sauder Concert Hall on Sept. 20 to say thank you and farewell to President Shirley H. Showalter for her service to Goshen (Ind.) College, many wore scarves in all shapes and colors to honor a leader whose trademark accessory connects to her passion for relationships and cross-cultural learning.

The special convocation was held in the music building for which Showalter led the fund-raising campaign to build and which was completed in 2002.

Town and gown: After a welcome by Goshen provost John D. Yordy, who has been named interim president and began serving in that post on Oct. 1, surprise speaker and mayor of the city of Goshen Allan Kauffman presented Showalter with a ceremonial key to the city on a maple leaf-shaped plaque. Kauffman, a 1971 Goshen graduate, began his term as mayor around the same time Showalter was inaugurated in 1997. He said President Showalter "has been good for Goshen College, and she has also done so much to strengthen town-gown relations."

Showalter, who resigned her post on Aug. 1, served her last day in office on Sept. 30 after teaching and serving as president of Goshen since 1976. In introducing Showalter at the convocation, board of directors chair Virgil Miller, said, "This is a bittersweet day, saying goodbye to our 14th president—a colleague, a friend, a teacher, a mentor … listen with thankfulness for an articulate president who believes in the loftiest goals of Christian higher education, in the ability of a metaphor to communicate complex ideas and who believes in you and that you have a special place here at Goshen College."

Showalter titled her address "Joy and the Goshen Journey." She began by sharing a memory from when she and her husband, Stuart, led a study-service term group to Haiti in 1981, when one student, after arriving at the Port au Prince airport, opened a bus window and greeting the whole country with an excited "Bon Soir!"

"To me, that little gesture signifies a special exuberance for loving, living and learning that I can only call 'Goshen joy.' Its ingredients derive from a hunger for beauty, truth and a better world," Showalter said.

She expressed the sadness she feels at leaving Goshen, but also the joy of having been part of the life of the 110-year-old institution.

"We can experience joy today because we have a treasure here that started at creation, was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, is a byproduct of the suffering of 16th-century Anabaptists, has a long tradition of learning in the academy and has found a home in this place called Goshen College," she said.

Showalter calculated that she spent 28 years—or 10,311 days—at Goshen College, teaching in the English department as well as history, women's studies and through grant programs, for two decades before accepting the call to become the first woman president of Goshen. In reflecting on her tenure, she described the campus as research center, classroom, worship center, cheering section, playground and launching pad.

"It is a place that honors our relationships to each other, our courage to take journeys by faith and our joy in each step," she said.

Then Showalter offered blessings to all and concluded by saying, "The joy I feel today follows many moments of working, playing, fasting, praying, mourning, rejoicing, disputing and reconciling. It comes from knowing I love you and reveling in that feeling. Thank you for this joy, joy, joy, joy I've got down in my heart."

Bringing ceremonial closure to her presidency, Showalter invited her mother to the stage to give a closing prayer at the convocation; Barbara H. Becker also offered a prayer at her daughter's inauguration 7½ years earlier. The audience stood to offer a collective gift to Showalter—an 800-voice offering of the hymn "Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow."

Other events of the day included a luncheon at which Miller said, "The next president of Goshen College will step on sturdy foundations laid by the Showalter administration."—*Jodi H. Beyler of Goshen College News Service*

[We are thankful] for an articulate president who believes … in the ability of a metaphor to communicate complex ideas.—Virgil Miller

Showalter titled her final address as president of Goshen College "Joy and the Goshen Journey."

Zac Albrecht

Christopher Dock and Bethany Christian high schools celebrate 50-year mark

Doug Hackman didn't want to go to Christopher Dock Mennonite High School (CD) in Souderton, Pa., as a freshman. But by the time he was a senior, he felt so connected to the people and to the place that he asked to be baptized in the campus pond.

Hackman, a 2003 graduate, is likely the only one out of 3,757 former students to make that request at CD. However, he's one of many alumni at the 50th anniversary celebration in July to say that spiritual and emotional growth—as well as academic—was key to their experience.

Hackman, with about 1,000 others, attended CD's anniversary July 9-11 entitled "Celebrating God's Faithfulness." The event drew former students and faculty and board members. They renewed ties at reunions, other events and a community worship service. The service included an alumni choir performance that highlighted the strong choral program that has shone through CD's spirit for generations.

It was this spirit—the "song" of faith that forms one community from many individuals—that captured the reluctant Hackman when he was a new student. His defenses dropped as CD welcomed him into the family.

"I soon saw that at CD you are a real person, not just another number," he says. "Martin Wiens, the assistant principal, knew I was having a rough time and took extra effort to hang out and talk. And teachers like Eric Bishop, an English teacher, and Rod Derstine, our choir director, made a big impact on me."

Their "special love"—a term penned by 1750s schoolmaster Christopher Dock regarding God's grace that helped him nurture students—drew Hackman into campus life. During his senior year, he asked to be baptized.

Integral to CD's mission is this baptism into God's life-giving waters. The school hopes to prepare students such as Hackman—now a sophomore at Eastern College in St. Davids, Pa.—to be servants who quench the thirst of other people. The faculty and staff show students that they are loved, valued and gifted, says Elaine Moyer, CD's principal since 1991. In turn, they hope young people become responsible colleagues in their vocations, involved members of their communities and congregations and compassionate citizens of a global society.

CD is God's miracle and mystery, and sometimes I think our biggest job is to stay out of God's way and let God do what God wants. —Elaine Moyer

Laurie L. Oswald

Former principals Lee Yoder (left) and Elam Peachey with current principal, Elaine Moyer, in front of a portrait of the 1750s schoolmaster Christopher Dock praying for his students.

Laurie L. Oswald

Clockwise from left, Helen Lapp, Sam Lapp, Ruth (Hersh) Delp, math instructor emeritus Daniel Reinford, R. Lee Delp and Beryl Martin at a picnic during Christopher Dock's 50th-anniversary celebration.

"CD is God's miracle and mystery, and sometimes I think our biggest job is to stay out of God's way and let God do what God wants," Moyer says. She came to CD in 1983 as a part-time physical education instructor and was interim principal before her current post.

CD has remained open to change but has also built an enduring campus community by standing firm on the foundation of Christ and his church, says Jim Lapp, one of CD's earlier teachers and now leader of Franconia Mennonite Conference's ministry team. He's seen how CD's vision of promoting Anabaptist values of peace, service and discipleship remains faithful to its roots while continuing to grow into new fields.

"In the era after the Second World War, Mennonites in this area were deeply concerned about how we were going to pass on our faith in a world so full of war and a growing secularism," Lapp says. "The church and its schools took on a separatist mentality that was very concerned about dress and such things as movies. … But as the church crossed a threshold into other eras, so did CD. It began to focus on the essentials of faith rather than the cultural offensives. … One of CD's strengths has been its willingness to evolve over the years from isolation to engagement."—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Schools that were created after World War II to provide separation from society reflect on half-century of change and celebrate warp and woof of education.

J. Kevin Miller

Heather Kropf, a member of Bethany Christian High School's class of 1990, performed at a late-night concert during the school's 50th-anniversary celebration June 11-13.

Bethany Christian Schools in Goshen, Ind., marked 50 years in June since first opening their doors to serve students of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference.

Born of a strong grass-roots movement within the conference for a school with a Christian emphasis and Christian teaching, Bethany has served more than 3,000 students, growing from 124 high school students in 1954 to more than 300 students in grades six through 12 in 2004.

Throughout many changes in society and school —new facilities, teachers and curriculum—Bethany's mission has held firm: to provide an excellent education in which students explore, grow in and strengthen their relationship with Jesus Christ. Throughout the 50th school year (2003-04), various chapel presenters reflected on aspects of Bethany's past, provided opportunities for students to gain new understandings of and appreciation for their community of faith. Accounts included a 1970s walkathon to Elkhart organized by students as a fund-raiser to help the school avert financial disaster, changing the school mascot from Braves to Bruins, the rise of interscholastic athletics and how earlier generations dealt with issues of dress and courtship.

Many students caught a new perspective about Bethany—a perspective throughout the pages of the new history of the school released in June, *Hearing Our Teacher's Voice*.

More than 600 people—including alumni, former faculty and board members, and other supporters—gathered on June 11-13 to remember the past 50 years and to thank God for blessing the school's mission of equipping students for Christian living.

With a weekend theme of "Building on a Foundation of Faith," the participation of original board members Russell Krabill and Ernest Bennett in opening and closing ceremonies provided a direct link between the purpose of founding Bethany in 1954 and its continued mission today. In between these ceremonies, weekend activities included drama, music, athletic contests, class reunions, worship and a banquet.

The banquet program of skits and storytelling provided both humorous entertainment and serious reflection. Wes Bontreger, a 1977 alumnus and former board member, shared stories of students and administration extending grace to him during his time as a student.

James Krabill, a 1969 alumnus, parent of three graduates and author of the final chapter in the school's history book, reflected on former teacher and interim principal Mary Swartley's image of the warp and woof of education at Bethany: education that emphasizes both excellent academic quality and development of Christian faith. He noted that the school's predominant focus has always been to prepare students for active Christian engagement in a needy world.

Sunday's concert of sacred choral music, featuring three vocal ensembles from the early years and a 100-voice alumni choir directed by former music teachers, illustrated the prominence of sacred music at Bethany over the decades and the school's role in cultivating musical gifts in students to equip them for service to the church and community. *—J. Kevin Miller of Bethany Christian High School News Service*

Choral music directors from Bethany's 50 years attended the June celebration (from left): John D. Smucker (1987-present), Diane Schrock Hertzler (1975-87), Darrel Hostetler (1967-75, 1985-86), Freeman Lehman (1959-67), Marvin Miller (1963-64), Robert Ewing (1954-59). Byron Kauffman (1992-93) was not present.

Class of 1957
Class of 1959
Class of 1961
Class of 1963
Class of 1965
Class of 1967
Class of 1969

J. Kevin Miller

Emergency flood relief efforts have been completed in India, Bangladesh and Nepal, although agricultural rehabilitation in Bangladesh and food-for-work projects in India will continue.

Nadene Sawyer

MCC flood relief worth $463,000

More than 10,000 families in Bangladesh, India and Nepal get help.

In the Bogra district of Bangladesh, Rokeya Begum steps forward to receive emergency relief supplies provided by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

In response to severe monsoon flooding, MCC recently provided some 8,600 families in Bangladesh with supplies, including rice, lentils, oil, candles and matches. A similar flood relief effort through the Brethren in Christ church in India aided 1,526 families, and MCC provided funds for relief materials for at least 100 families in Nepal.

At a distribution in Belkuchi, Bangladesh, MCC worker Philip Geiser, of Knoxville, Tenn., saw recipients staggering under the weight of bags of rice.

"Among the items in a packet, the rice inspired the most interest," Geiser says. "I noticed that dozens of women, in their haste to collect the rice, whizzed by the matches, candles and salt. As they were called back to receive those items, their minds were still fixed on the rice."

A family of five will eat for about 10 days, giving those people valuable time to pursue other pressing needs.

Geiser writes that from the materials provided, "a family of five will eat for about 10 days, giving those people valuable time to pursue other pressing needs such as rebuilding houses, restoring crop land, cleaning tubewells and even (providing) a short time to express their agonies and gratitude alike to God."

Monsoon flooding this summer claimed more than 2,000 lives and affected millions of people in Bangladesh, India and Nepal. While the waters have receded, families—many with few resources to begin with—lost crops, food stores and homes and struggle to rebuild their lives.

MCC's total aid package for the region, worth some $463,000, will also include agricultural rehabilitation in Bangladesh and a food-for-work program in India.

See www.mcc.org/bangladesh for more information.—*Philip Geiser is a member of Concord Mennonite Church in Knoxville, Tenn.*

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*Rates effective Sept. 1, 2004, and are subject to change on a monthly basis. There will be a 1 percent premium on construction loans during the construction period. This service is available to churches and institutions associated with the Mennonite Church USA and related Anabaptist denominations.

Ohio church plant is refuge of hope

City on a Hill grant helps group deal with failures and triumphs.

Every Tuesday evening in the borrowed space of a church building, seven people gather for an hour of personal sharing, prayer and Bible study. On the surface, they don't seem to have much in common. Some of their faces are white; some are black. The youngest is not yet 20. The oldest is in her 90s. Some are trying to overcome difficult pasts; others face uncertain futures. But with so many differences that in other circumstances could make them incomprehensible to one another, one common purpose binds them in uncommon understanding: the desire to become a core of believers that grows into a thriving church.

The leader of this group—a community Bible study that is part of a church plant seeking to become Refuge Mennonite Church—is Jacqui Rozier. In February, Rozier was commissioned by Lee Heights Community Church in Cleveland to plant a church as a refuge of peace in the midst of Euclid, a neighborhood divided by racial tensions. The church plant is part of Mennonite Mission Network's City on a Hill program, which each year provides a grant for urban ministries in specific metropolitan areas. Refuge Mennonite is based on the Lee Heights model, which for many years has been a beacon of racial harmony in an urban neighborhood.

"The Bible study started on July 13 and has met each Tuesday since," Rozier says. "It was my desire that these gatherings be multicultural in attendance. We have a wide spread of ages at the table, and everybody's in a different place. We're just all there, sharing.

"We are studying the book of James," she adds. "We've been speaking about how the Holy Spirit helps us when we pray and how that's especially important when we don't know what to say. Sometimes it's just a moan or crying in his presence. We've been very open emotionally with each other. We've all dealt in one way or another with our failures and our triumphs."

For example, she tells how the group has watched one of its members grapple with bondage to a lifestyle he did not like. The study of James was particularly relevant as he struggled for the words with which to pray for help.

"We have all seen how the light came on for him, remembering his lowest point—how God met him where he was," Rozier says. "All the things he wanted for his life are now indeed taking place. It's been miraculous."

In the short time since it began meeting, the group has also helped provide a family who had none with home furnishings, offered advice and counsel to a young man applying to college, cleaned and refurbished the home of a woman who has not had a visitor in five years and provided moral support to a couple in recovery from addiction.

Rozier

Rozier and a group of pastors distributed about 800 flyers in the neighborhood to advertise and invite residents. To follow up, she mailed about 100 postcards.

Every Tuesday, as the group arrives, Rozier places a handmade sign on the lawn of the church's meetingplace, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, which pastor Craig Bode has allowed the group to use free of charge. She removes the sign again upon leaving.

"I had envisioned starting a worship service when the Bible study reached a consistent attendance of 20 or more," Rozier says. "I am wondering what the possibilities would be now if we had our own building where we could have Sunday-morning access and more of a community presence."

Each member of the Refuge Mennonite Bible study received a copy of the NIV Study Bible, donated by members of Salem Mennonite Church in Kidron, Ohio.—*Ann Graham Price of Mennonite Mission Network News Service*

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ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 8-20)
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- Editor@TheMennonite.org
- fax 574-535-6050
- 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794

CALENDAR

Eastern Mennonite University, homecoming and parents' weekend, Oct. 8-10. For more information, call 540-432-4245 or visit www.emu.edu/homecoming.

Eastern Mennonite University, Exploring Ministry Studies Seminar for prospective seminary students, Oct. 31-Nov. 2. More information, contact 540-432-4257 or email yoderda@emu.edu.

WORKERS

Blank, Bill D., was ordained and installed as pastor Aug. 22 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

DeLeon, Seferina Garcia, ended Aug. 31 as pastor at Iglesia Menonita del Buen Pastor, Goshen, Ind.

Fretz, Stephen P., was licensed and installed Aug. 15 as pastor at Cedar Grove Mennonite Church, Greencastle, Pa.

Gonsman, Elsie M., was licensed and installed May 23 as pastor at Roaring Springs (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Hartzler, Robert, began Sept. 1 as interim pastor at Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

Kingsley, Chris, was licensed Sept. 12 as associate pastor of youth and young adults at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind.

Lapp, John H., began Sept. 1 as interim pastor at Independence Gospel Fellowship, Wellsville, N.Y.

Leichty, BJ, was licensed Sept. 12 as associate pastor of visitation and worship at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind.

Martin, Miriam, was licensed for specific ministry of conference minister Aug. 28 at Atlantic Coast Conference of Mennonite Church USA.

Murr, Robert G., was installed Aug. 22 as pastor at Bethel Mennonite Church, Gettysburg, Pa.

Smither, David K., was licensed for specific ministry of interim pastor May 16 at Hopewell Mennonite Church of Reading (Pa.).

Sosa, Rolando, ended Aug. 31 as pastor at Iglesia Menonita del Buen Pastor, Goshen, Ind.

Vielman, Jorge, ended Aug. 31 as pastor at Iglesia Menonita del Buen Pastor, Goshen, Ind.

Weaver, Dale L., was ordained and installed Sept. 12 as pastor at Sandy Hill Mennonite Church, Coatesville, Pa.

Weidner, Mark, began Sept. 1 as co-pastor at Perkasie (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Pamela, was ordained Sept. 12 as pastor at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Alderfer, Justin Luke, Jan. 13, to Troy and Dawn Regener Alderfer, Oley, Pa.

Anderson, Kaden Cole, June 4, to Marshall and Lindsay Dirks Anderson, Inman, Kan.

Beachy, Leah Shenk, Sept. 7, to Linford and Alicia Shenk Beachy, Denver, Colo.

Bixler, Stella Glenne, Aug. 30, to Jeff and Amy Wenger Bixler, Poland, Ohio.

Ediger, Tessa Blair, Sept. 13, to Kevin and Rachel Strawn Ediger, Windom, Kan.

Froese, Garrett Scott, June 25, to Greg and Lisa Hawkinson Froese, Inman, Kan.

Gianella, Tillman Roth, July 29, to Chris Gianella and Erin Roth, Baltimore, Md.

Giesbrecht, Marlyse Ruth, Sept. 8, to Peter and Tamara Ruth Giesbrecht, Sellersville, Pa.

Hurst, Camden Gregory, Sept. 3, to Chad and Coleen Rohrer Hurst, Manheim, Pa.

Hurst, Jesse Dean, Aug. 14, to Troy and Trina Minnich Hurst, Manheim, Pa.

Kropf, Ellis Robert, Sept. 9, to Ron and Kara Histand Kropf, Hubbard, Ore.

Lee, Olivia Anne, Aug. 27, to Darrell and Rachel Shutt Lee, Baltic, Ohio.

Lusby, Rodney Michael, Aug. 11, to Joe (Lee) and Kristin Lusby, Atglen, Pa.

Maldonado, Katherine Rose, Sept. 1, to Fabien and Dana Williams Maldonado, Canfield, Ohio.

Robinson, Caden Emanuel, Sept. 9, to Mo Robinson and Michaela Graber, Denver, Colo.

Siebert, Kaden Lee, Sept. 10, to Jason and Amber Luth Siebert, Henderson, Neb.

Stoltzfus, Hailley Grace, Aug. 3, to Daryl and Kristine Stoltzfus, Cochranville, Pa.

Webster, Kaleb Mason, June 14, to Micah and Ashley Kendrick Webster, Hutchinson, Kan.

Wenger, Melanie Lorena, July 6, to Matthew and Margarita Wenger, Harrisburg, Pa.

Wightman, William Richard, Sept. 18, to Bill and Meg O'Brien Wightman, Harrisonburg, Va.

MARRIAGES

Dunn/Knutson: Anna Dunn, Dalton, Ohio, and Joseph Knutson, Grand Fork, Minn., July 24 in Portland, Ore.

Hofstetter/Wenger: Kyle Hofstetter, Kidron, Ohio, and Marissa Wenger, Dalton, Ohio, July 24 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Kauffman/Nafziger: Jesse Kauffman, Neb., and Jena Nafziger, Wauseon, Ohio, July 24 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

Lehman/Miglich: Samantha Lehman, Kidron, Ohio, and Matt Miglich, Canton, Ohio, July 24 in Longboat Key Beach, Fla.

Rupp/Waidelich: Noah Rupp, Archbold, Ohio, and Jodi Waidelich, Archbold, June 26 at St. John's United Church of Christ, Archbold.

Shenk/Zook: Charity Shenk, Akron, Pa., and Steven Zook, Akron, Aug. 14 at Akron Mennonite Church.

DEATHS

Correction: In the Sept. 7 issue of The Mennonite, we failed to list Mark Hartman, the youngest son of Ellen Pellman Hartman. We apologize for the omission.

Amstutz, Rodney Dale, 43, Lenexa, Kan., died June 29 of an aneurysm. Spouse: Beatrix Amstutz. Parents: Mahlon and Judy Amstutz. Children: Phillip, Frederick. Memorial service: July 3 at Rainbow Mennonite Church, Kansas City, Kan.

Bender, Goldie Miller, 84, Parnell, Iowa, died Sept. 7. Spouse: Delmar Bender. Parents: Joel and Barbara Swartzendruber Miller. Children: John David, Alice Golden, Virginia Rew, Les, Laurie; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 9 at West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell.

Dick, Hulda Mierau, 90, Henderson, Neb., died Aug. 29. Spouse: John Dick (deceased). Parents: Henry E. and Aganetha Brucks Mierau. Children: Robert, Evelyn Reutzel, Ronald; eight grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 1 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Erb, Kathryn Landis, 91, Souderton, Pa., died Sept. 7. Spouse: Harold S. Erb (deceased). Parents: Henry and Clara Schlosser Landis. Child: Kenneth; two grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 10 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Good, Ruth Shelly, 88, Harrisonburg, Va., died Aug. 21 of heart failure. Spouse: Wilmer S. Good (deceased). Parents: Henry and Mary Horst Shelly. Children: James M., Velma A. Campbell, Ruby G. Turner, Charles R., Shirley C. Shank; eight grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Aug. 29 at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, Harrisonburg.

Graber, Raymond, 89, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, died Aug. 21. Spouse: Doris Roth Graber (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Barbara Rich Graber. Children: Marilyn Leichty, Gary, Russell; five grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 26 at Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Mt. Pleasant.

Hershberger, Katie, 95, Walnut Creek, Ohio, died Aug. 27. Spouse: (1st) Andrew Coblentz (deceased), (2nd) Henry Hershberger (deceased). Parents: Sam and Lizzie Yoder. Children: Betty Kurtz, Leon Coblentz, Owen Coblentz, Pete ; 17 grandchildren; 37 great-grandchildren; five great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 30 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Hartville, Ohio.

Imhoff, Mae Orendorff, 87, Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 26. Spouse: Clarence E. Imhoff (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Katie Beller Orendorff. Children: Phyllis Wulliman, Georgia Imhoff-Smith, John; six grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 28 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Kauffman, Anna Martin, 81, LaJunta, Colo., died Aug. 5. Spouse: (1st) H. James Martin (deceased), (2nd) Daniel Kauffman. Parents: Omar and Glenora Swartzendruber. Children: Judith Martin, Janet Shank, Elaine Schmucker, David Martin, Daniel Martin, Daniel Jr., Debra Miller, Sally Green, Jim; 18 grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 12 at East Holbrook Mennonite Church, Cheraw, Colo.

Kreider, Kathryn Louise, 73, Van Nuys, Calif., died Aug. 20. Parents: John F. and Mattie Mae Hinkle Kreider. Funeral: Aug. 27 at Community Bible Church, Van Nuys.

Lehman, J. Clair, 85, Lititz, Pa., died Aug. 30. Spouse: Dorothy M. Eshleman Lehman. Parents: George E. and Leah Martin Lehman. Children: Lola M., C. Ronald, James Marlin (deceased). Funeral: Sept. 2 at West Bethany Chapel of Landis Homes, Lititz.

Miller, Jacob S., 81, Orrville, Ohio, died Aug. 3. Spouse: Elizabeth Miller (deceased). Parents: Steven and Mary Miller. Children: Dean, Ann Sullivan, Gary; eight grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 6 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Miller, James, 76, Sugarcreek, Ohio, died Sept. 15. Spouse: Ellen Miller. Parents: Alvin and Ida Beechy Miller. Child: Beth. Funeral: Sept. 18 at Walnut Creek (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Miller, Perry G., 96, Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 28. Spouse: Mary G. Roth. Parents: Gideon and Lydia Kanagy Miller. Children: Sue Graham, Thomas, Roger; nine grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 30 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Myers, Melba, 77, Wooster, Ohio, died Sept. 4. Spouse: Herman F. Myers. Parents: Raymond and Velma Myers. Children: Doris Zimmerly, Linda, James, John, Velma Shetler; four grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 8 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Nickel, Grace Unruh, 92, North Newton, Kan., died Sept. 5. Spouse: Carl Nickel (deceased). Parents: John S. and Mary Ewert Unruh. Children: Allan, Dwight, Janice Kinsley; 12 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 8 at Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, Kan.

Richer, Florence Short, 89, Wauseon, Ohio, died Sept. 11. Spouse: Harold Richer. Parents: Daniel and Anna Kutzli Short. Children: Lowell, LouAnn Kanagy, Sandra Tinsler, Donna Oswald, Linda, Rhonda; nine grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 14 at North Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon.

Yoder, Melvin, 72, Sugarcreek, Ohio, died Sept. 15 of cancer. Spouse: Mary Miller Yoder. Parents: Manasses and Edna Mullet Yoder. Children: Sharon Erb, Diane, Debra, Mark, Jeffrey; seven grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 19 at Walnut Creek (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

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Mennonite Manor, a leading Continuing-Care Retirement Community, seeks a seasoned professional for ***director of development.*** Must have proven experience in fund raising and leadership in soliciting major gifts. Must possess strong leadership, organizational, management, communication, computer and interpersonal skills. Bachelor's degree plus five years experience preferred. Send resumé to CEO, Mennonite Manor, 600 W. Blanchard, South Hutchinson, KS 67505 or email klassens@mennonitemanor.org.

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Mennonite Mission Network has an immediate opening for a ***full-time stewardship counselor*** to encourage individuals to make financial contributions to Mennonite Mission Network through cash and deferred gifts. Candidates should bring a passion to connect with God's reconciling mission to the world and the ability and desire to relate to people. Ability and willingness to travel is a must. Ideally, this person will work out of the Great Plains office in Newton, Kan. The full position description is located on the Web at www.Mennonitemission.net. Interested persons should send a letter of interest and resumé to Staff Recruitment, Mennonite Mission Network, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515, or email staffrecruitment@Mennonitemission.net.

***Executive director*: Bridge of Hope Lancaster and Chester Counties**, a Christian nonprofit organization serving homeless women with children, seeks dynamic individual to oversee the program, fund development, strategic planning, budget and manage staff of 12. Qualifications: Master's degree, three years management experience and proven fund-raising ability. Strong communication and computer technology skills necessary. Submit resumé to Nancy Sauder at bridge@sauderline.com or call 717-569-4279.

'Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation' filed Oct. 1, 2004, for The Mennonite, publication no. 17-2340, published twice-per-month (24 issues in preceding 12 months) at 1700 S. Main St, Goshen, Elkhart County, IN 46526. Phone 574-535-6051. Annual subscription price, $38.75. Publisher, The Mennonite Magazine Board; editor, Everett J. Thomas, at above office address. Owned and published by The Mennonite, Inc., Goshen, Ind. (above mailing address), a church-related nonprofit organization, tax exempt under code section 501(c)(3). Stockholders owning 1 percent or more of total stock, none. (No stock issued.) Known bondholders, etc., none. The purpose, function and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes has not changed during the preceding 12 months.
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Everett J. Thomas, Editor

Early childhood and literacy*: Bluffton University** invites applications for a ***tenure track position beginning fall 2005. Doctorate preferred, ABD considered. Certification in early childhood and experience in literacy. Required minimum of three years teaching in early childhood, additional experience in literacy required, graduate-level teaching experience preferred. Teach graduate and undergraduate education courses in curriculum and instruction in early childhood education and literacy. Supervise student teachers in early education classrooms. Compensation commensurate with education and experience within the university pay scale. Review of applications begins Nov. 1 and continues until an appointment is made. For additional information see www.bluffton.edu/about/employment/fac-edu. Send letter of interest, vita, three letters of reference (submitted directly from the referee) and official transcripts to Elaine Suderman, Administrative Assistant for Academic Affairs, Bluffton University, 1 University Dr., Bluffton, OH 45817-2104. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. EOE.

Reception in honor of Prof. Ray Gingerich, celebrating more than 25 years of teaching at Eastern Mennonite University. Saturday, Oct. 9, 3-5 p.m. at the Discipleship Center on the EMU campus. All former students, colleagues and friends welcome. Sponsored by the EMU Bible Dept.

Mennonite Central Committee is accepting applications for the position of ***MCC Central States executive director.*** The director provides vision and oversight for all MCC programs in Central States. Familiarity with MCC constituency, strong relational administrative skills and cultural competency required. Experience with budgeting, administration, Spanish language skills preferred. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply. Significant travel time within the United States.

Contact Charmayne Brubaker; 717-859-1151; cdb@mcc.org or your nearest MCC office for the full job description. Application review begins immediately. Position available Jan. 1, 2005, or sooner, if possible.

Norristown New Life, a 115-member, urban, multicultural, Spanish-English congregation, is seeking a half-time (2.5 days per week) ***bilingual Hispanic associate pastor*** to serve as a member of our pastoral leadership team. We are prayerfully seeking someone who is able to work with a leadership team, has a passion for evangelism and community outreach, is gifted in both preaching and teaching, has a vision for urban church growth, is flexible and spiritually mature, has an Anabaptist understanding and commitment.

For more information, please contact Adamino Ortiz, Search Committee Chair, Nueva Vida Norristown New Life, 3 E. Marshall St., Norristown, PA 19401, email Adamino@fast.net or NNL3@juno.com.

Western Mennonite School board of directors and the executive director have announced an applicant search for the ***academic principal*** position. Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students both local and at a distance. Located on 45 acres in the Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience with a comprehensive vision for expanding enrollment, program and facilities. The application deadline is Dec. 15. For information call 866-343-9378 or email wmsoffice@teleport.com.

West Clinton Mennonite Church located in rural northwest Ohio, is seeking an energetic, spiritually motivated, fun-loving individual who is gifted in working with youth and young adults to fill an ***associate pastor*** role. For further information contact Marvin Leatherman at 419-335-2221 or leather@bright.net.

Philhaven, Mt. Gretna, Pa. ***Full-time director of pastoral care/ CPE supervisor/associate supervisor***. Philhaven is a faith-based, nonprofit, free-standing behavioral health organization serving the Lancaster/Lebanon/York/Harrisburg area. Due to the retirement plans of the current director, the starting date can be between January and August, 2005. In addition to being a CPE supervisor or associate supervisor, successful candidates will have an M.Div. or equivalent degree and be supportive of an Anabaptist faith perspective. Resumés may be sent to CEO, Philhaven, P.O. Box 550, Mt. Gretna, PA 17064; fax 717-270-2456.

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Work is progressing on a church building for this new congregation in North Canton, Ohio, thanks in part to a grant from the JoinHands Mennonite Church Building Program.

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House Calls and Hitching Posts: Stories from Dr. Elton Lehman's Career Among the Amish as told to Dorcas Sharp Hoover (Good Books, 2004, $19.95) includes true-life stories from the unusual career of Dr. Lehman in Holmes County, Ohio.

Piano in the Vineyard by Jean Janzen (Good Books, 2004, $9.95) is her latest book of poems (reviewed in the Sept. 21 issue).

He Came Preaching Peace by John Howard Yoder (Herald Press, 2004, $14.99) has been reissued as part of a series of books by the Mennonite theologian.

What Does It Mean to Be a Man? by Thomas Hart (Paulist Press, 2004, $14.95) shows readers how to heal the wounds of boyhood, recover the world of feeling, humanize aggression and sexuality, find their true selves, develop their spirituality and grow in intimacy with those they love.

Being With Jesus: Devotions for a Growing Disciple by Carol Baergen (Kindred Productions, 2004, $9.99) is narrative-based, provokes understanding, contemplation and the desire to grow as a disciple.

The Missing Peace: The Search for Nonviolent Alternatives in United States History by James C. Juhnke and Carol M. Hunter (Pandora Press, 2004, $29.50) has been updated and enlarged. It challenges the routine application of the myth of redemptive violence to the history of the United States.

Hunger for the Word: Lectionary Reflections on Food and Justice—Year A, edited by Larry Hollar (Liturgical Press, 2004, $19.95), explores the Lectionary with a focus on anti-hunger advocacy, social activism and political issues affecting marginalized people.

The Comforter by Sergius Bulgakov, translated by Boris Jakim (Eerdmans, 2004, $34), explores all aspects of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, both as they are viewed in the Orthodox tradition and throughout church history.

Mary, Mother of God, edited by Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Eerdmans, 2004, $16), inquires into Mary's place in the story of salvation, personal devotion and public worship.

The Doctrine of God: A Global Introduction by Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (Baker Book House, 2004, $21.99) is the third of a three-part series on God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. It presents historical, European, North American and non-Western perspectives on God.

God Is Not ... Nice, One of Us, an American, a Capitalist, edited by D. Brent Laytham (Brazos Press, 2004, $14.99), takes on today's prevailing misconceptions about who God is by boldly stating who God is not.

Threshold Bible Study by Stephen J. Binz (Twenty-Third Publications, 2004, $12.95) is a thematic Scripture series designed for both personal study and group discussion. Each book has 30 lessons. Titles include **The Names of Jesus**, **People of the Passion**, **Pilgrimage in the Footsteps of Jesus** and **Advent Light**.

A Parent's Guide to Prayer by Kathy Hendricks (Twenty-Third Publications, 2004, $10.95) connects with the frenetic world of the modern parent and helps us see how prayer can be a regular part of family life.

Following in the Footsteps of Christ: The Anabaptist Tradition by C. Arnold Snyder (Orbis Books, 2004, $16) is part of Orbis' Traditions of Christian Spirituality Series. Snyder's sympathetic study of the 16th-century movement draws on court records to give an intimate glimpse into Anabaptist beliefs, practices and spirituality.

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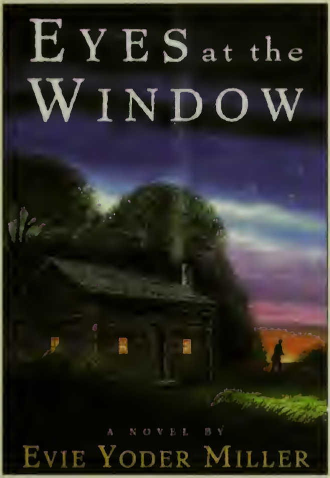

Eyes at the Window
a novel by Evie Yoder Miller
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This historical novel, literary and engaging, examines a close-knit community of Amish pioneers over several decades (right up to the eve of the American Civil War).

Employing eight different voices, Miller unpeels the cohesions and tensions as settlers move west while others stay behind. Beneath the surface but never quite forgotten is the unsolved murder of an Amish baby (based on a true incident).

This is a story of judgment and misplaced responsibility, of attempts at love and forgiveness, and finally of grace despite unspeakable loss. It is told lyrically from within this often-idealized but sometimes-scarred human community.

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What reviewers say —

"Miller crafts a narrative that seizes the reader's imagination from the beginning and never lets go."
— **Publishers Weekly**

"Spanning 1810-61, Miller's first novel offers a stunning and sensitive portrayal of the Amish men and women who first settled in Pennsylvania, with some families later migrating west to Ohio. This compulsively readable book draws us into the characters' joys and struggles. First-rate writing and canny insight into Amish ways and thought. Highly recommended for all collections."
— **Library Journal**

"Recommend **Eyes at the Window** *to readers who enjoy well-researched historical fiction."*
— **CBA Marketplace**

"Miller is particularly skilled at conjuring the internal lives of people who might seem stoical but, upon deeper examination, prove as passionate as anyone."
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Everett J. Thomas

Yoked first to other Christians

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?—2 Corinthians 6:14 (KJV)

As Mennonite Church USA members become engaged in the U.S. presidential election, church life suffers as we become politically polarized. But loyalty to a political party or candidate does not trump commitment to each other in Christ's body. If it does, then partisan politics becomes the ox to which we are yoked.

During the past 12 years as an elected official, I have been skeptical of political parties. In 1990, the mayor came to our home and asked me to run for city council. He was a Democrat. I admired some things he wanted to do in our town—build bike paths, start a recycling program, work proactively at race relations—so I ran as a Democrat.

Party identification at a local level is almost meaningless. Republicans outnumber Democrats in Goshen, Ind., but we have a Democratic mayor and majority on the council. However, when called to help with the party's state or national efforts, I resist. The problem is that a political party's overall values do not line up with the values I care most about—those instilled in me by the Mennonite church. It is dangerous to be unequally yoked with values and convictions that are contrary to our Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.

Neither the Republican nor Democratic party lines up with such a whole-life ethic.

As Mennonites, we believe in the sacredness of all life. We do not go to war and we do not kill. We believe that life in the womb is sacred. We believe that life on death row is sacred. But beyond abortion and capital punishment, we also believe that the lives of the poor and the disenfranchised are also sacred and the most deserving of help from our society.

Neither the Republican nor Democratic party lines up with such a whole-life ethic. Both parties clearly intend to use military power to ensure national security—even if such national security requires a preemptive war.

So Mennonites are left with several choices: We can decide not to vote in elections. This is a venerable tradition that resonates with our history of nonresistance and has integrity as an expression of two-kingdom theology.

Or we can vote for the candidate that comes closest to the value we consider highest priority. This, too, is an an honorable tradition. It accepts responsibility as a citizen of this country even while acknowledging that our primary citizenship is in the kingdom of God. And there is integrity in each of us voting our conscience, even if that means cancelling out the vote of another Mennonite.

However, the challenge for us in this year's election is to not let partisanship—or loyalty to a particular candidate—create division and mistrust with other sisters and brothers in the church. It is especially important that we not judge another member's political preference as a lack of faithfulness.

To address this unbecoming tendency among Christians, *Sojourners* magazine publisher Jim Wallis has launched a national newspaper ad campaign that says simply, "God is not a Republican … or a Democrat" (see "Sojourners Launches Election Petition," Sept. 21). This effort should be unnecessary, but as the presidential election poisons relationships between Christians, it has become necessary to remind those who follow Christ that God's kingdom is not of this world—and any attempt to conflate the kingdom of God with a political party or candidate is wrong. For Christians to have primary loyalty to a political party is to be "unequally yoked."

The Believers Church Bible Commentary says of 2 Corinthians 6:14, "The text persuades the readers to maintain community life completely separate from the defilement of the faithless world."

Those who participate in any election must avoid the defilement of the faithless in the world of partisan politics. We must maintain trust with each other within the community of faith. Elections come and go, but the kingdom of God lasts forever. We are ultimately responsible for how we exercise citizenship within God's kingdom, and that includes being yoked first with believers.—*ejt*

Election survey: A postcard is inserted at page 24 for U.S. readers: Send it by Oct. 15 to be included in a survey of voting preferences.

The Mennonite

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October 19, 2004

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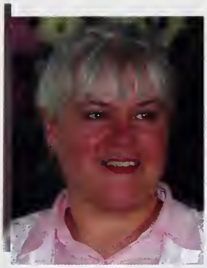
Burning brightly or burning out?



Donna Mast is co-pastor of Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Don't hide your light under a basket! Instead, put it on a stand and let it shine for all. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.—Matthew 5:15-16 NLT

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke fits perfectly, and the burden I give you is light."—Matthew 11:28-30 NLT

After I'd responded to his question of how I was doing, my conference minister said, "That's burnout." I smiled politely and let him continue, but inwardly I thought, I hear people claim they're burned out all the time.

Later I came across a clinical definition and realized my conference minister was right. I was reading about me.

I was on a spiral downward. I hadn't hit bottom yet, but if I continued on the direction I was going, I would. When that happened, I would likely need professional help, medically and spiritually.

"Burnout" describes the fatigue, loss of interest and emotional breakdown that eventually results in the inability to function. Caregivers, particularly clergy, are prime candidates. Here is part of what I read: "Contributing factors to burnout among clergy are too much work; too long a day; too varied a complex of issues, problems and duties with which to deal; too unrelenting a drain on emotional and mental resources; repressed anger; insufficient opportunity to get away; inattention to self-care; and being caught in a crossfire of conflicting or contradictory expectations." (*The New Dictionary of Pastoral Studies*, Eerdmans, 2002.)

Many of these factors were a part of my life. I knew I had to do something to halt my downward spiral if I were to continue pastoring. Some factors I could do nothing about, but I could take steps toward health and wholeness.

My self-care involved a visit to my doctor, beginning a diet and exercise program and getting adequate sleep. I guarded my free time more carefully and made a deliberate effort to use free time for doing things I enjoyed but had neglected. I reclaimed my devotional time, no longer using it to study for work-related things but as a personal time between God's Spirit and my own. I began to journal again, a spiritual exercise that also became a place I could vent the anger that had built up in me.

I shared my struggles with a few close friends and began a spiritual friendship. These friends helped by holding me accountable in my self-care and by listening to my burdens. I know they continue to hold me in prayer, and I am grateful.

It was no coincidence that I stumbled onto a clinical definition for burnout so soon after my conference minister named the condition for me. I believe God's fingerprints are all over both incidents as well as in my healing. God does not intend for us to work ourselves into an early grave or to carry burdens too heavy for us to bear. Jesus said to come to him, for in him we find burdens that are light and rest for our souls.

It has been more than two years since I began this journey out of the downward spiral. I continue to work at self-care, but by God's grace I'm still pastoring and am glad to be here. I share this with you because pastors and their congregations need to know that "burnout" is not merely an overused term but is real and dangerous. The congregation that values its pastor will respect the need for time away and will understand that the pastor, and family if there is one, must be properly cared for. The pastor who wants to avoid burnout will pay attention to self-care, not only in times of stress but as a way of life. TM

TheMennonite

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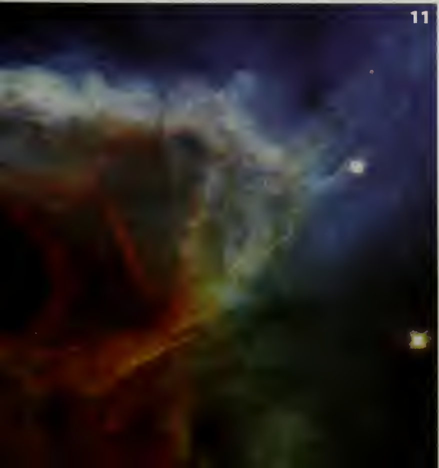

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Praying for president, cannot support war

Levi Miller's "Why We Pray for the President but Cannot Support the War" (Sept. 21) left me confused. Part of the problem is that it uses the words "pacifist," "Christian conscientious objector," "nonresistant pacifist," "nonresistant Christians" and "nonresistants" so loosely that I can't tell if these words all mean the same thing or if he is using the phrase "nonresistant Christian" to describe a group that is, for example, different from "Christian conscientious objectors."

A second problem is that he uses the phrase "favorable to their government" but fails to be clear what this means. Is this the same as other phrases he uses such as "respectful to their government" and "grateful to the state"? I have no idea what Miller means by "favorable to their government." Does this mean voting for whoever is the incumbent? Does this mean never challenging the government to be more just?

Other articles in the same issue of *The Mennonite* report that many Mennonites around the world have spoken out on behalf of the Mennonite pastors who have been imprisoned in Vietnam, that Mennonite Central Committee is asking for 5,000 messages about the wall that is being built in Palestinian territory and that 40,000 citizens have signed petitions declaring that "God is not a Republican … or a Democrat." Is Miller actively encouraging or discouraging these activities? I have no idea.

I agree with Miller that it is important that we make a case for the nonresistant pacifist. Unfortunately, after reading the article I am not clear what that case is.*—George Lehman, Bluffton, Ohio*

I appreciated Levi Miller's article making a case for nonresistant pacifism. As a pastor, I agree that this form of pacifism—rooted in Jesus, the Scriptures and history—is a seasoned and authentic witness. Respect of government and opposition to war can seem contradictory, but I believe Miller hit the nail on the head when he observed that the main arena of nonresistant pacifists is the church. A vibrant ecclesiology as the body of Christ—modeled on Jesus' mission in the world—helps provide internal consistency for this stance toward war and government. Thanks for printing Miller's article. It's worth reading several times.*—Mark R. Wenger, Waynesboro, Va.*

Levi Miller tries to support but instead undermines the nonresistance doctrine. Miller could have mentioned that Jesus advocates, according to one Gospel writer, taking up the sword. But Miller gets around it by claiming gratefulness and quiet charity work so we can practice naive piety in our militaristic nation. I strongly object to this "die stille im lande" (the quiet in the land) line of thinking. We need to get our light out from under our bushel of nonresistance. We should unite with all who practice and promote nonviolent alternatives, not just because Jesus did it but also because scientific research proves its effectiveness.

In our tradition of nonviolence, we Mennonites have a key to a stronger America and even a reformation of our military. I believe that following Jesus the Mennonite way gives us an "arsenal" (Ephesians 6:10-20) to strengthen America far beyond what this president and his evangelical supporters can imagine.*—David Graber, Hardin, Mont.*

Re Levi Miller's article: While I understand he is not giving his approval, I was disappointed at his casual approach to the war in Iraq. It is inconceivable to me that any nonresistant Christian could sanction the invasion of Iraq on the grounds that our nation is exercising its God-ordained function of "protecting the innocent and punishing the wicked." Instead, this war has done what most wars do; it has opened the gates of hell. It has killed several times more civilians than died in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Rather than making anyone safer, it is recruiting thousands of new terrorists around the world. People who were friends of the United States now see us as the enemy.

Most distressing of all, evangelical Christians are among the president's strongest supporters for this war. It is saddening to hear Mennonites express support for the current administration's conduct of the war against terrorism. As Mennonites, we have the unique opportunity to spread the message that the good-news teachings of Jesus are applicable to the war on terror. I pray that our church publications would boldly meet this challenge.*—Abraham K. Gehman, Bally, Pa.*

IN THIS ISSUE

The focus of this issue is pastoral ministry. Ryan Ahlgrim calls it "the greatest job in the world" but puzzles over why more young people are not considering pastoral ministry (page 9). His guesses are that pastors are considered too poor, too busy and the job too hard, but he refutes each misconception. Preaching—a central task of pastoral ministry—gets a new look by Jonathan Larson (page 12) who claims that oral societies have much to teach us and that the qualities of oral preaching "accord with the ethos of early Anabaptists." Finally, Laurie L. Oswald provides a brief feature on bishop Leslie Francisco III, leader of the largest Mennonite Church USA congregation in the United States (page 15). Francisco's model for ministry required "a drastic change in our church structure, but those changes have transformed us."*—Editors*

Sojourners petition

Re "Sojourners Launches Election Petition" (Sept. 21): I don't see the point of the petition. I've seen Jerry Falwell claim in a TV interview that he's always been a registered Democrat, so apparently he votes on issues he cares about and not according to party affiliation. There are an estimated 4,000 abortions per day in this country. No politician who is in favor of continuing the killing is worthy of Christian support. This does not necessarily mean that a candidate who is against abortion should be automatically supported. It does mean every candidate who supports abortion should be automatically opposed.

Jim Wallis says, "Christians acting on personal conviction can choose to vote for any candidate."

If he really believed this he would welcome with open arms people who decide to vote for George Bush because of the single issue of abortion.
—Jerry C. Stanaway, Lombard, Ill.

Academic excellence is not elitism

When Everett J. Thomas warned against academic elitism at Mennonite colleges in the editorial "Picking Presidents" (Sept. 7), I trust he was not confusing elitism with excellence. Elitism is exclusive and therefore undesirable. Academic excellence is at the heart of any quality education, including a Mennonite college education.

Students at Mennonite colleges should expect the best in preparation from the faculty who are to guide them not only in meeting the challenges of the increasingly global marketplace, but to become leaders in the church of the future. They should be as fully challenged academically as students at the best institutions. To settle for less is to equate Mennonite education with mediocrity in the service of maintaining the status quo.

There is no reason that a future president of Goshen College—or any other Mennonite college—cannot be qualified for administration, academic achievement in his or her field and commitment to the vision of Mennonite Church USA. When Mennonite institutions of higher education work at academic excellence in a context where our Christian Anabaptist faith and vision permeates every level of the institution—from the sacred space of the classroom to the worshipful silences of chapel, from relationships in the dormitory to friendly competition on the playing field—then we truly have a treasure.

Elitism operates on a model of scarcity, elevating a few at the expense of others. Excellence, on the other hand, operates on a model of abundance, enlarging us all and creating something that we can all be proud of in our own Mennonite way.*—Ann Hostetler, Goshen, Ind.*

Disagrees about God-talk

I am perplexed by Gordon Houser's Mediaculture column ("How Not to Witness: God-Talk at the Olympics," Sept. 21). Does the reality that "30,000 children die every day from malnutrition and preventable diseases" mean that we should not express the ways God meets us in our lives? For Andre Ward, God was present as he was boxing. Ward obviously was grateful to God for God's presence in his life and in the boxing ring. We need to make sure we are not engaging in "egotistical strutting" of a different kind: the kind that diminishes the faith journey of others and what they experience with God.

The question Houser wants asked is also problematic. Would we ask a family, whose child was just cured from an illness, if they can explain why God intervenes in the affairs of the world to save their child when 30,000 kids die every day from preventable diseases? Should I deny the small but significant ways God works in my life because of the reality that 30,000 children die each day of preventable diseases? Should I keep silent about the ways I meet God in mundane circumstances for fear that someone may ask me to explain difficult circumstances where God appears to be silent?

As we head into the Mennonite Church USA convention in Charlotte, N.C., the theme is "Can't Keep Quiet." Should we add, "except for boxers who seem to go 'on and on' about their faith"?
—Michael Danner, Metamora, Ill.

A call to help Canadian farmers

Mennonites of many flavors have a long-standing history of reaching out to those who are hurting or in need. Currently, farmers who raise cattle in the United States are experiencing record high prices. They and the businesses where they will spend this year's windfall are simply receiving the economic benefit of our government's national policy of blocking cattle imports from Canada.

While we in the church have not initiated this policy and are seemingly powerless to effect any change, we must be aware that we have Mennonite brothers and sisters in Canada who are experiencing a long and devastating depression of cattle prices. While many cattle farmers in the United States are smiling all the way to the bank, our Canadian siblings are suffering immense losses due to prices being a mere fraction of the costs of production.

I extend to the church—both grass-roots and institutional—an urgent call to reach out to our neighbors in need. Collectively we have the economic power to really make a difference. Do we have the spiritual power to bring it to fruition?
—Marty Wenger, International Falls, Minn.

ONLINE POLL QUESTION

Regarding the U.S. presidential election, I plan to vote for:

- ○ George Bush
- ○ John Kerry
- ○ Ralph Nader
- ○ Not sure/undecided
- ○ I never/seldom vote
- ○ I usually vote but will not vote this time

This question will remain online at www.TheMennonite.org until Oct. 26.

IN BRIEF

Goshen receives $1 million grant

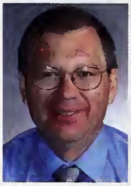
Goshen College is among 22 Indiana colleges and universities recently awarded grants by Lilly Endowment Inc. as part of the program called the "Initiative to Recruit and Retain Intellectual Capital for Indiana Higher Education Institutions," which proactively addresses what is known as "brain drain," the migration of educated citizens away from Indiana to seek employment. From the total, $500,000 will be added to the Mininger Center fund for faculty development and research, bringing the center's endowment to $1.6 million. The other half of the grant will be used in efforts to retain and recruit students, especially from the local Hispanic community.—*Goshen College News Service*

From Peace Train to terrorism?

Yusuf Islam, the former singer Cat Stevens, who was denied entry to the United States in September "on national security grounds," denies links to any organization such as Hamas. "His Web site (www.yusufislam.org.uk) gives a summary of his unequivocal opposition to terrorism," writes Hasan Zillur Rahim in the *National Catholic Reporter* (Oct. 8).

Keim named president of Hesston College

HESSTON, Kan.—The Mennonite Education Agency Board of Directors, on recommendation of the Hesston College Board of Overseers, has appointed Howard Keim as the next president of Hesston College.


Howard Keim

Arlan Yoder, chair of the Hesston College Board of Overseers, made the announcement Sept. 25. "He is an excellent, seasoned leader with a significant personal understanding of Hesston College and its mission," Yoder said.

Keim said, "I have strong loyalty to Hesston College and Mennonite Church USA and am eager for this new opportunity to serve." He begins his service Jan. 1, 2005, with a preparation time of approximately six months. He will assume the presidency from interim president Peter Wiebe sometime after the academic year ends in early May.

Keim, 52, has served as a professor and administrator at Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kan., since 1996, except for one year as field services director for Communities in Schools of Kansas.—*Mennonite Education Agency*

If I had a hammer

Goshen (Ind.) College senior Jason Schmucker of Holland, Ohio, works on a Habitat for Humanity house. Almost 400 students, staff and faculty took part in Goshen's annual Celebrate Service Day Sept. 22.—*Goshen College News Service*

Settlers again attack CPT workers, others

HEBRON, West Bank—On Oct. 9, 2004 at around 3 p.m., on the road from Tuba to Tuwani, eight settlers with wooden sticks and sling shots attacked Christian Peacemaker Teams workers Diana Zimmerman and Diane Janzen, an Operation Dove member (name withheld by request), one resident from Tuwani, two residents from Tuba and two fieldworkers from Amnesty International, Donatella Rovera and Maartje Houbrechts.

When the accompaniment team saw the settlers, dressed in blue jeans, T-shirts and masks walking toward them they called the police and walked away from the settlers. Three settlers with sling shots ran after the Palestinians, hurling stones at them. The other five settlers attacked the accompaniment team. The masked settlers hit Donatello Rovera and Diane Janzen with wooden sticks. Then the settlers beat the Operation Dove member and stole his video camera. The settlers finally ran away when one of the Amnesty International women yelled at the settlers in Hebrew, "The police are coming. You are not going to get away with this."

The police did not arrive until 35 minutes after the internationals called for help.—*Maia Williams*

Jim Bishop

Flipping pancakes for worldwide relief

Eldon Suter and granddaughter Abby Berkshire-Price flip pancakes for the breakfast crowd at the Virginia Mennonite Central Committee Relief Sale Oct. 1-2 in Harrisonburg. The duo has worked together at the sale seven consecutive years. This year's sale raised $234,300 in gross receipts.

CPT reservist dies in hiking accident

CHICAGO—On Aug. 22, Christian Peacemaker Teams reservist Kathleen Namphy died while descending Mount Damavand in Iran. While details are unclear, she apparently fell and hit her head about 100 feet below the summit. Her guide ran to get help, asking another group of hikers to stay with her, but when he returned, she and the hikers were gone. Rescuers recovered her body Aug. 26.

Namphy participated in an April 2002 emergency CPT delegation to the West Bank and later served with CPT for three months in Iraq. She was scheduled to lead a delegation to Iraq at the end of September and then spend another three months with the Iraq team.—*CPT*

Joe Bontrager

Another Hmong church among us

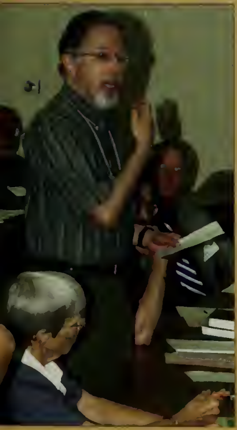
Youth from Hickory Hmong Mennonite Church share a song at a dedication ceremony Sept. 5. The church plant is supported primarily by Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and by the Tennessee/Carolina/Kentucky District churches of Virginia Mennonite Conference. About 60 people from the Hmong Mennonite churches in Ontario, California, Colorado and Minnesota traveled to Hickory to share their support.

Bible and religion teachers share experience

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Eighteen faculty members from undergraduate Bible and religion programs in colleges related to Mennonite Church USA met Sept. 25-26 at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg.

At this first such meeting, conversation focused on mission, academic work and church relations. Five faculty shared their experience "standing with one foot in the church and one foot in the academy": Duane Friesen, Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.; J. Denny Weaver, Bluffton (Ohio) University; Nancy R. Heisey, EMU; Marion Bontrager, Hesston (Kan.) College, and Keith Graber Miller, Goshen (Ind.) College.

Participants included Duane Friesen and Patricia Shelly, Bethel; Gerald Biesecker-Mast, Sue Biesecker-Mast, Laura Brenneman, Randall Keeler and J. Denny Weaver, Bluffton; Christian Early, Ted Grimsrud, Nancy Heisey, Steven Jolley, Heidi Miller Yoder and Earl Zimmerman, EMU; Palmer Becker, Marion Bontrager and Michelle Hershberger, Hesston, and Keith Graber Miller and Paul Keim, Goshen.



Fifty years later

Leonard Gross, church history scholar, was one of nearly 30 seminary students 50 years ago who participated in the first classes that brought together students from Goshen (Ind.) Biblical Seminary and Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Chicago. He and other class members gathered Sept. 16-17 at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., to share their insights about this first venture in what was then inter-Mennonite theological education.—*AMBS*

Bluffton professor wins peace history prize

BLUFFTON, Ohio—The Charles DeBenedetti Prize Committee has voted to award the 2002-03 DeBenedetti Prize to Bluffton University professor Perry Bush for his article "The Political Education of Vietnam Christian Service, 1954-1975," published in *Peace and Change* (April 2002).

Since 1987, the Peace History Society has awarded the Charles DeBenedetti Prize every other year to the author or authors of an outstanding journal article (published in English) on peace history. Articles submitted may focus on the history of peace movements, the response of individuals to peace and other reform movements, gender issues in warfare and peacemaking, comparative analyses and quantitative studies.

Bush is a professor in the history, religion and political science department.—*Bluffton University News Service*

Mennonites celebrate 50 years in Israel

EAST PETERSBURG, Pa.—Authentic mission, according to Wilbert Shenk, flows from utter vulnerability and is based on reciprocity in relationship with the host people.

Speaking to a group of some 200 people at East Petersburg Mennonite Church Sept. 24-25 to celebrate 50 years of Mennonite witness in Israel, Shenk said Mennonite presence in Israel worked as a catalyst to an indigenous Messianic movement. Shenk served with the former Mennonite Board of Missions and is professor of mission history and contemporary culture at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif.

That commitment to be a reconciling presence in Israel, without attempting to plant churches, was innovative during an era when the goal of most missions was to increase the number of denominational churches.

It was an approach that led ultimately to the proliferation of Messianic congregations. When the first Mennonite team began work just five years after the creation of the state of Israel, there were few Messianic congregations. Today there are more than 100 Messianic congregations in Israel.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

IN BRIEF

MMA Journey Award goes to Ohio congregation

Former department-store-executive-turned-pastor Mike Kelly (above) accepts MMA's Journey Award Sept. 26 on behalf of his congregation, Grace Community Church in Bryan, Ohio. MMA noted Grace Community's stewardship ministries, including creation of a homeless shelter, thrift store and constant giveaways—tons of food, furniture, toys and clothing—have been distributed to date. Kelly says that last year the church distributed about $175,000 worth of food, clothing, toys, furniture and monetary gifts for rent, utilities and medicines—all resulting from efforts of only a 200-person church in rural northwest Ohio.—*MMA*

God vs. Mammon

The general council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, at its international meeting this summer in Accra, Ghana, agreed to adopt a faith-based stance against U.S.-style capitalism. The members represent more than 75 million Christians in 100-plus countries. —*Sojourners*

BIBLIA
TESTAMENTS
IN MEMORY OF

Sho

Why pastoral ministry is the greatest job in the world

by Ryan Ahlgrim

I am a pastor because I could not conceive of a more important vocation. I have never regretted my decision. It is the greatest job in the world.

them how to live

When Chaim Potok, the well-known Jewish novelist, decided to become a writer, his mother had a different idea. “Chaim,” she said, “don’t be a writer. Be a brain surgeon. You’ll keep a lot of people from dying and you’ll make a lot of money.” Chaim said, “No, Mama, I want to be a writer.” Periodically his mother tried to change his mind. “Chaim, listen to your mother. Become a brain surgeon. You’ll keep a lot of people from dying and you’ll make a lot of money.” But he always replied, “No, Mama, I want to be a writer.” Eventually she lost her temper. “Chaim, you’re wasting your time. Become a brain surgeon. You’ll keep a lot of people from dying.” Chaim shouted back, “I don’t want to keep people from dying; I want to show them how to live.”

Pastoring addresses every area of life—physical, emotional, social and spiritual. It pulls it all together and gives life purpose, direction, joy and meaning.

That is exactly how I feel about being a pastor. I want to show people how to live.

I have been a pastor for about 20 years. I am not one because anyone in my family has ever been a pastor, or because it was expected or in order to please anyone, and not because of any overwhelming vision or conversion experience. I am a pastor because I wanted to become a pastor, because I could not conceive of a more important vocation. I have never regretted my decision. It is the greatest job in the world.

There is a severe shortage of pastors in the Mennonite church as well as in most other denominations. According to a survey conducted by the Alban Institute, since the 1970s the number of pastors under 35 has dropped by at least half, and in some denominations by two-thirds. The average age of those going into seminary is much older than it used to be, which means seminary graduates will be in ministry that many fewer years. Even so, we are not training nearly enough pastors for the needs that exist. Mennonite Church USA needs 120 new pastors every year (far above the number we are actually training) simply to replace the number of those retiring.

But I cannot figure out why there is such a shortage of pastors. I don’t understand why young people aren’t going into pastoral ministry in droves. There is no other job like it. The joy of pastoring is the best kept secret in the church. Three factors make being a pastor uniquely positive.

Variety: First, I can’t think of another job that has more variety. I remember all of those monotonous summer jobs I had in college, doing the same thing over and over. I could hardly wait to begin a vocation in which I could exercise creativity and a wide variety of skills. Now, as a pastor, each day is filled with different activities: research, writing, hospital visits, home visits, community organizing, counseling, teaching, planning, leading, dreaming. And every day is different, meeting different people, responding to different challenges. Only one thing is the same for me: Every Sunday I have to preach a sermon. But even this is a creative activity because I do not say the same things over and over. Instead I have the spiritual challenge of creating something new and true every week. I am an artist.

Flexibility: Another positive feature of being a pastor is flexibility. In many ways I am my own boss. I set my own schedule. I decide when I am going to get up in the morning and when I am going to bed. I decide when I am scheduling a meeting and when I am not. Obviously there are meetings I need to go to, but with some advance planning I can arrange my schedule so that I can travel to various out-of-state events or have an extra day free to get together with friends. I know of no other job that has this much flexibility.

Variety and flexibility are added benefits to pastoral ministry, but the real reason being a pastor is the greatest job in the world is because it is the most meaningful job in the world.

Meaningful: A young woman came into my office one day. She did not attend church, but she was dating a young man in my congregation. She sat down and said, “I don’t believe in God and I hate God.” That was the beginning of many conversations I had with her. Slowly I learned of the painful

Continued on page 10

Pastors who are too busy have mostly themselves to blame. They just have to learn to say no.

Continued from page 9

experiences in her life in which she had felt abandoned and betrayed. But she started coming to our church, and through experiencing our congregation and through our conversations, she began to change. A year later she publicly gave her life to God through Jesus Christ and was baptized.

One day I received a letter from a man in prison. He wanted to know if a Mennonite pastor could come and visit him. He was not a Mennonite, but he had met some Mennonites who had impressed him and he wanted to know more. So I visited him and continued to visit him every other week for the next three years. During that time I was the only visitor he had. He was in prison for a violent crime. He confessed that crime to me and took full responsibility. Two years ago he was released. Because he had no family or friends in the area, my church found him an apartment and paid for the first few months of rent. We helped him find a job. We gave him clothes, furniture and a bed. A woman gave him a beautiful quilt she had made. A group of men in my church met with him regularly to help him adjust to life outside prison and be accountable. He felt overwhelmed by our love. He attended our church. He also gave his life to God, was baptized and became a member of our congregation.

What does it matter if we survive cancer but don't know how to live? What does it matter if we have a big money-making business but our life feels pointless? What does it matter if we have everything we want but don't have meaning? Pastoring addresses every area of life—physical, emotional, social and spiritual. It pulls it all together and gives life purpose, direction, joy and meaning.

Ryan Ahlgrim is pastor of First Mennonite Church in Indianapolis.

The Heart of the Matter: Pastoral Ministry in Anabaptist Perspective, edited by Erick Sawatzky (Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2004, $22.95), is a multifaceted look at pastoral ministry from writers connected with Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. Behind several of the 17 essays is the debate between "those who emphasize the priesthood of all believers" (functionalism) and "those who maintain the value of a trained, professional pastorate" (office). The conclusion seems to be that the most effective congregations are "those that have honored and respected all the gifts of the Spirit, including the gift or office of pastoral minister." Other essays look at the various roles of the pastor: shepherd, teacher, prophet, public leader, healer, spiritual orienteer, listener, artist and counselor. It becomes clear that pastoral ministry requires many skills, including what Rebecca Slough points out as the ability to improvise like a jazz musician. Yet Erick Sawatzky shows that "effective pastoral leadership is more than simply a matter of doing; it is also a matter of being." Pastoral ministry is unique, writes Loren Johns, in how it brings together "God's call, personal integrity, the position itself and competence to do the work." This is a book for every pastor's shelf but also for congregations to read and discuss.—*Gordon Houser*

The Heart of the Matter
Erick Sawatzky

Too poor: If being a pastor is such a great job, why aren't more people becoming pastors? I suspect there are three reasons. First, some people assume it doesn't pay enough. One of my friends in seminary had a fiancée who was afraid they would be living in poverty if he went into pastoral ministry. If one's goal is to make as much money as possible, then it is true that pastors do not make enough money. But becoming a pastor should never be motivated by money anyway. I get paid about $45,000 a year. I don't know if that sounds like a lot or a little, but it is certainly enough for me to have all that I need plus quite a bit more. And if I do get into a financial bind, my church will always help me out. A few years ago, when medical expenses for my wife and son piled up, both of our cars broke down and we didn't have the money to repair or replace them. A couple in the congregation, aware of the situation, handed me a substantial check to get us on our feet again. I have never had a stingy church. Everything I have asked for I have always been given.

Too busy: Some people think pastors are too busy—they have no personal time or time with their children. I discovered in college that a lot of PKs (Preacher's Kids) resented their parents for not spending more time with them. So I made a commitment that my family would come before my church. I have kept that commitment. Whereas the average mainline Protestant pastor spends 12 hours a week with his or her children, I spend about 35 hours a week with my kids. I give myself reasonable personal time. I have no pager or cell phone. I don't even have an answering machine at home. Pastors who are too busy have mostly themselves to blame. They just have to learn to say no.

Too hard: Finally, some people think pastoring is just too hard. A pastor has to have an incredible range of skills and be able to work effectively with all kinds of people. To this I say: Yes—it is hard. That's what makes being a pastor so challenging and exciting. I don't want an easy job. Despite the difficulties, it is a vocation that is constantly buoyed up by faith in God's grace. As the apostle Paul might say, we hold our pastorate in jars of clay so that we realize that this extraordinary ministry belongs to God and does not come from us.

I thank God that the people in my congregation have been called into many different vocations and that they bring the Spirit of Jesus into all of those vocations. That is as it should be. But I hope some of them, especially some of the youth and children, will also be called into the vocation of pastoral ministry, because the need is great. And besides, it's the greatest job in the world.

Plain talk to Hubble, reading the Bible backward

by Charles Semones

Walking on Hargrin's Ridge at night, he happens to look up
at all that: constellations like fox grapes, their luminous vines
threading outer darkness. He thinks of Hubble voyaging
toward Creation—a maverick scholar poring over the Bible
backward, through a phalanx of mirrors, to the first verse
of Genesis, In the beginning God. … And in the split second
that follows, God thinks the word light, commands what it stands for
to be on the face of the void, and halves it into day and night.
And so the sun and moon. Looking upon them, God likes what he sees,
and calls it good. Creation has thus begun, with its members
presenting in their appointed order like schoolboys lining up
at the watercooler after hard play at recess. But Hubble,
relying only on what's been programmed into it, has no thought
of heresy, and so must go beyond light, before In the beginning God
to see if there is total nothingness in which the Being we know
as God does not exist—except in his own imagination. He keeps
a low profile. No explaining is apt to be forthcoming. Like a cagey,
reclusive old poet, he's reluctant to show his hand. But Hubble,
insatiate to know God's nature whole, would stop at nothing to unmask
his face. God, trying to stay even-keeled, says, "You will not find me
in this backwater absent clocks and calendars. I'm there where you
came from, with the lone farmer walking at night on Hargrin's Ridge.
On your journey home—back to Revelation—stop by 1 Corinthians 13
if you would know my ways, and learn the name I prefer to go by."

Charles Semones is a member of Deep Creek Baptist Church, Harrodsburg, Ky.

What the oral church can teach us about preaching

Cues from barefoot Anabaptist kin

by Jonathan P. Larson

A raft of rare and potent images linger in the wake of the first-ever world gathering of Anabaptists in Africa in 2003: the army of women laboring to stoke fires, cook and serve scarce food; the musical groups swathed in brilliant color animating the thousands of worshippers; intense dialogue in workshops and consultations punctuated with earnest prayer; nameless others who tamed the wild of transport and money exchange; thousands from every imaginable walk of life who came in search of kinship to a crossroads called Bulawayo.

But equally memorable was the array of preachers and teachers who rose by turn to challenge, chide, comfort, instruct and inspire the assembly. Underlying their messages were qualities that tied them closely to the patterns of the communities from which each came. From the privileged, literate church came those with carefully scripted reflection based upon textual and theological studies. Then came those from the barefoot, oral church who (to the disquiet of translators and program managers) plunged into live, unpredictable engagement with the congregation. The ebb and flow of these contrasting platform styles was matched by the responses of the gathered community: now pensive or puzzled, now passive or restless, now stirred to answer with gesture and voice, now erupting in song.

The oral preacher knows that the manuscript etched on the faces of the people is indispensable if Good News is to be made known.

The study of the contrasts between oral and literate societies (see box) is raising provocative questions that may reshape the future of preaching, especially where the formation of preachers has largely been a task of academics. And this comes when Western culture is questioning how far reason and logic, the tools of academic training, can take us in answering the deepest questions of the human spirit.

Without doubt, the literate church has amazing resources, having filled libraries with the fruit of theological and textual studies. Brilliant and disciplined reflection has illuminated the nuances and textures of sacred writ, insights the barefoot church of the South wants to share. (Note, for example, the requests from African independent churches for Mennonite Bible teachers.) But does the barefoot church of Africa, Asia and Latin America have gifts the literate church needs for its life? Or, Can the exuberant Christians of the Two-Thirds World point the way toward renewal of our own practice of preaching?

The garb of lecture: For some years now, there has been a restlessness in western preaching, a growing disquiet with proclamation in the garb of lecture. A love of story has returned to warm western preaching. Some preachers are discovering the power of acted parables in the ancient prophetic tradition. Some even speak about drama as an asset. There is a growing movement to bring back into the service of Good News the awakened imaginations of both preacher and congregation. More and more, pastors are reaching for the language of poetry. Emotion is being readmitted to the pulpit. It is dawning on literate practitioners that the melody of spoken word is a fine art worthy of the gospel.

The pattern of this search for a new day in the preaching of the western church resembles the preaching long native to the oral church. What are those qualities? First, the oral church prizes the full and active participation of preacher and congregation. It's a lively partnership. No one must be driven into passivity by one person's solo effort. The oral preacher knows that the manuscript etched on the faces of the people is indispensable if Good News is to be made known.

Second, the oral church loves the ear, how sound envelops the people and creates community. (By contrast, literate communities tend toward the visual, by nature a private, inner experience.) Listen to the singing of the oral church. It knows the power of sound—without hymnbooks—to engage and lift the collective imagination.

Engagement: Siaka Traore of Burkina Faso preaches on Africa Day, Aug. 16, 2003, at Africa 2003, the Mennonite World Conference gathering in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

Third, the oral church loves language that leaps and works, weeps and sings, paints pictures, evokes color and form and texture, leads through proverb and story to gospel. (The verb "to be" is a creature of western preaching and philosophy.)

Fourth, oral preaching, at its best, practices—nay, depends upon—an immediacy, a now-ness. This is a live event. Yes, the preparations have been made. Prayer and reflection have opened the way. But no one can say just what will come to pass in that freshly minted gospel moment. A sign will appear. The Holy Spirit may move on the face of preacher and people. An air of anticipation is abroad. All must be fully awake. The divine breath may whisper a life-sustaining word to the congregation—command the light to shine, banish crippling despair, turn withering conflict into a garden, mend broken bodies and hearts, call forth justice from immutable wrong, turn grief to wild joy.

The ethos of early Anabaptism: Many of these qualities of oral preaching accord with the ethos of early Anabaptism: its conversational openness, earthiness, unselfconscious authenticity, dependence upon the Holy Spirit to animate the Scriptures, its need to be present here and now. This would have been the preaching manner of the upstart farmers, artisans, laundresses, housewives and peddlers that took 16th-century Anabaptism out of the mayors' chambers and lecture halls and turned it into a social movement. And these were the ones who welcomed us to Bulawayo, whose radiant faith in the face of distress rang out winsomely from pulpit and people.

As a literate church, we possess an embarrassment of riches from searching the texts of the Scriptures and from reflection on what that search has disclosed. These gifts must be affirmed and appropriated for the good of community and mission. But let them not obscure for us that the brave, oral church practices an order of preaching with much to teach us about a living message that animates people and preacher in the journey of faith.

Such integration of oral and literate strengths is glimpsed in Luke's account of Jesus' hometown inaugural sermon. There, we are told, on the Sabbath, seemingly impromptu, he is invited to speak and is handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, a reminder that literacy is a great gift. He reads the ancient passage that declares in soaring phrases the inception of Jubilee. Then he rolls up the scroll and returns it to the steward, taking his seat in the teacher's chair. We are told then that the undeflected gaze of the preacher meets that of a rapt community. And the first and defining word of oral witness is spoken, "Today …" It is a recovery of that "Today …" to which the barefoot church points us in our search for a rebirth of preaching in our time.

The brave, oral church practices an order of preaching with much to teach us about a living message that animates people and preacher in the journey of faith.

Jonathan P. Larson, formerly a Mennonite pastor in Atlanta, is now in Botswana.

I realize it is dangerous to speak of oral and literate as uniform, monolithic categories. There exist few, if any, purely oral societies in our time. And even societies having high rates of literacy exhibit residual or secondary orality. But having names for these underlying realities allows us to examine more closely what we would otherwise fail to recognize.—*JPL*

Communities
Pursuing
Christ's
Purpose
SECOND IN A SERIES

Christ's healing power to every hurting heart

Healing and deliverance comes from South Africa to Virginia.

by Laurie L. Oswald

What happens when a former Hindu and a former Catholic in South Africa get married and begin a healing and deliverance ministry? In the case of Flinn and Karen Ranchod, they move to Virginia to plant a Mennonite church.

For several years prior coming to Virginia, the couple, part of New Zion Ministries in South Africa, felt called to plant a church but didn't know where. Then, through connections with Stanley Green, former South African and current executive director of Mennonite Mission Network, they met Bishop Leslie Francisco III at Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Va. It's the largest congregation in Mennonite Church USA, with 1,500 members and several church plants (see box, page 15).

"We had visited many cities in South Africa, searching for where God would set us down, but nothing ever felt right," says Flinn, a former businessman and associate pastor with New Zion Ministries. "But after meeting the leaders from Calvary, we sensed that the church plant could be in the United States rather than at home."

Bringing Christ's wholeness to broken people is a challenge—particularly within the context of North American materialism.—Flinn and Karen Ranchod

So the couple—married after Flinn became a Pentecostal after growing up Catholic and Karen had converted from Hinduism to Christianity—moved to Virginia to be part of Calvary. For a year, Francisco and other leaders trained them in understanding North American culture and church planting in this environment, they say. In 2002, they started Calvary Community Church Chesapeake (Va.), which now has about 50 members.

Bringing Christ's wholeness to broken people is a challenge—particularly within the context of North American materialism, they say. When people have all the material goods money can buy, it's easier to pad their pain with creature comforts, they say. The "demons" of loneliness, abandonment, addictions and broken marriages can hide.

Behind the smile: "People often come in smiling, but behind that smile and the makeup there is often a broken and depressed person that needs healing," Flinn says. "In South Africa, the darkness that people deal with shows itself so much more easily, and is not as sophisticated, because they don't have all the wealth to cover it up."

In this multicultural community that includes Africans, Jamaicans, South Africans and North Americans, they've applied aspects of Free Indeed, they say. The ministry helps unearth old wounds by the healing love of Jesus, who frees them from the childhood trauma, marriage turmoil and abuse. The ministry uncovers deep-seated issues that cause physical ailments such as allergies and back problems, as well as emotional and spiritual issues that spur sexual immorality and addictions.

Karen says, "I love seeing how people experience God's transforming power and see people change when they experience a deep relationship with God. … Already we've seen broken marriages restored.

"It gives me joy to see how God fills the dark, empty vacuum in them and souls are saved. That's the beauty of church planting—not that we have planted a church but that Christ is planted in people's hearts."

Their own faith stories formed compassion for their people at the church. Karen, who grew up Hindu, tells of experiencing God as a faraway, unfeeling deity rather than a friend and Savior. "In the 1820s, Indian people came to South Africa as indentured workers, and that his how my family came to be there," she says. "When I started dating Flinn, I was still Hindu and was a very shy person who had grown up being afraid of God.

"Flinn and I talked a lot about faith, and one day I gave my heart to the Lord. … I experienced a living God who listened and answered me, not a dead idol who was deaf to my cries. Jesus' grace is free. One doesn't have to pay her way to him with good

You need to PERSEVERE so that when you have done the will of God you will receive what he has promised. Hebrews 10:36 (NIV)

Karen and Flinn Ranchod, pastors of Calvary Community Church Chesepeake, began the church as one of the many church plants spawned by Calvary Community Church, Hampton, Va.

works. Jesus' love is liberating, so unlike the bondages I felt before."

Before he shared Jesus with her, Jesus had shared himself with him, Flinn says. He left the Catholic Church in his 20s, after experiencing Jesus in a new way. It set him on a new path of following Christ in daily life rather than going to church only occasionally.

"My mother got saved and experienced a new life with Jesus, and that inspired me to want that, too," he says. "In my family, we had all gone to church because our parents and grandparents did. Now I wanted to go to church because Christ had come to me."

Christ's healing power is available to every hurting heart, whether that person lives in North America or South Africa or elsewhere, the couple says. They want to be conduits that bring Jesus' liberating power and God's healing reign throughout the world.

"We believe Christ's church is a church for the nations," Flinn says. "We want our church here to be Word-based and Christ-centered and not built upon cultural biases. We want to help take the gospel to the ends of the earth." TM

Laurie L. Oswald is news service director for Mennonite Church USA.

Son of church planter carries father's legacy farther

Bishop Leslie Francisco III was born into a Mennonite family that had a vision for planting churches. But even his father, Leslie Francisco II, did not imagine how much his legacy would multiply after he died in 1992.

In 1990, Francisco III, the oldest son, began to help his father pastor Calvary in Hampton, Va., which in 14 years under his son's leadership has become the largest congregation in Mennonite Church USA. Calvary Community has grown from about 50 members in the early 1990s to 1,500 members today. Calvary has planted several other churches in the region, including Calvary Community Smithville and Calvary Community Church Chesapeake.

The late Steven Francisco, who died in early July, worked alongside his brother, Francisco III, for many years. Myron Francisco, the youngest brother, oversees daily building maintenance operations at Calvary Community.

"Our father passed his vision on to his sons, but by the grace of God we've taken it farther than he probably dreamed," Francisco III says. "My father was a true visionary, and I miss my brother a lot now, too. We really complemented one another, and he was a dynamic minister.

"But God has a greater plan, and I have faith in knowing that God knows what that is. We see through a glass darkly, but when I get to heaven, where my father and brother are, I will see Jesus face to face and I will understand things much more clearly."

The congregation hopes to plant seven churches in 21 years in a 40-mile radius of Hampton. In the last seven years, it has planted two in that radius and several outside it, including congregations in North Carolina, Ghana, West Africa and Texas.

People often ask Francisco to share his secret for church growth, he says. His father modeled what a good visionary is. But like a true visionary, the son also wanted to develop that model even further.

"This congregation started like many others, in which we voted on everything from the color of the carpet to the color of the paint in the washrooms," Francisco says. "I virtually had more problems pastoring 50 people than I now do 1,500 people.

"I realized that if we spent all our time voting on things and then disagreeing on those votes, we wouldn't get anywhere fast. I realized that in order to have a vision, we would have to allow visionary leaders to help take us there. That would mean a drastic change in our church structure, but those changes have transformed us."

Laurie L. Oswald

Bishop Leslie Francisco III

For Francisco III, those changes have meant developing what he calls an "apocongregational" (apostolic/congregational) model. It allows him to be the leader. But he seeks counsel and prayer from several other circles of leaders before decisions are made. Then this larger discernment group brings the decision before the larger body for affirmation.

"This allows all of us to use our God-given gifts in clear roles that keep things moving more quickly while at the same time remaining open to the Spirit's leading within the larger body."

But no matter what model God calls Calvary Community to use, Francisco III knows it is God who brings the growth for the good of the church for eternity. "Our time on earth is miniscule," he says. "I could live to be 100 and it would still be such a small segment of time compared to eternity. But I am focused on being as faithful in the time God gives me to help multiply the kingdom." —*Laurie L. Oswald*

War crimes by warriors and peacemakers

Lessons from a war of words on an Easter Sunday

by Michael A. King

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.—Matthew 5:9

But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer.—Roman 13:4b

We peacemakers risk committing our own war crimes. This is what I concluded after I assaulted my friend Sam, on Easter Sunday no less, for his views on war.

The feelings that led to the assault gathered strength that morning, during our 2004 Easter worship at Spring Mount (Pa.) Mennonite Church, where I pastor. That day the weight of leadership felt unusually heavy. Easter is a day of celebration; I didn't want to dash the festivities with dour references to Iraq. But the news had been bad. After some in the Iraqi city of Fallujah had torn four Americans apart, estimates were that the United States retaliation had killed 600 Iraqis, including as many as 300 innocent men, women and children. I was outraged. What justified the U.S. attitude that four American deaths, savage as they clearly were, counted as moral obscenity—yet our killing 75 times as many innocents in response was merely the price of war? Was this not a war crime in the name of ending war crimes?

Though pastors must sometimes simply stand for the truth, the power inherent in our role is abused if we too easily imply that to disagree with us is also to disagree with God.

Easter Sunday. A day to celebrate God's triumph over death. But could the celebration be anything but cheap if the death flooding Iraq was simply ignored? Especially when so many American leaders and citizens were prepared to see the very cause of Christ as justifying U.S.-caused deaths, thus inextricably this year mixing Easter and war?

Meanwhile some in my congregation believe the sword Romans 13 portrays God as giving governments is the one America wields against Iraqi evildoers. So I couldn't comment on Iraq from above the political fray. Anything I did risked setting my views against those in the congregation holding different ones. And though pastors must sometimes simply stand for the truth, the power inherent in our role is abused if we too easily imply that to disagree with us is also to disagree with God.

War crimes

by warriors and peacemakers

What to do? I decided during our prayer request time to read briefly from that morning's *Philadelphia Inquirer* account of events in Fallujah. Then I asked that, amid whatever might be our varying views of how God was working in the world and Iraq, we pray for each person across the planet—in America, Fallujah or anywhere—as a child of God. Who knew, I suggested, what might happen to global foreign policy if all Christians truly believed all people are no less God's loved and cherished children than Americans? I still felt the burden of seeking to handle responsibly this high-voltage agenda. But I felt I had at least found a way through.

Then came the afternoon. My family and I were with friends—including the one I'm calling Sam, holder of radically different views yet with whom we've nurtured a decades-long friendship. But this time we stumbled into debate over what we should be doing in Iraq precisely at a time Sam and I were both feeling our views had become literally life and death, since even as we spoke people were dying, on one side or another. As we recoiled from all that death, we each felt we had to stand where we stood, on our opposite sides, I aghast at the evils we were committing in Iraq, he aghast at the thought of not battling the evils in Iraq.

Soon our conversation was throwing off smoke. Then flames. Others were commenting also and on my side, but less heatedly. Sam and I, who had become the ringleaders, were each nearly shouting. I was thinking this was what Christians in Germany must have felt when they stood up against the Nazis. Sam was feeling his version of the same thing. We were at war.

The war itself was grim. The aftermath felt worse. Something between us had been violated. And I felt that I, fighting for the cause of peace, was more the violator than Sam. He had simply fought articulately on behalf of his belief that sometimes we must use force to stop evil. But I had waged war on behalf of my opposition to war. I had wanted to vanquish his viewpoint and its unredeemable evil. I had wanted this savagely enough that at some primordial level I experienced our conversation as one in which I did in fact have a weapon aimed, if not literally at his body, then all too truly at his heart and soul and very being.

I still believed what I believed. But I had to address the violation. So I wrote him the next day. Among things I said, after explaining the struggle I had faced with how to pastor on Easter Sunday, was this: "When yesterday's discussion erupted, I was still feeling the burden and voltage of leading the congregation in that prayer a few hours before, and that got mixed into my engagement with you. I think I handled my role as pastor responsibly, offering as much light as I knew how. But you didn't deserve to have that voltage land as a missile aimed at your views, since you had done nothing to generate it and my feelings were thus disproportionate to the voltages being caused by the actual discussion before us. I do hope you survived the intensity and will aim to be clearer with myself if in future discussions I sense that voltage from other contexts is getting mixed in."

And I told him I had participated in ganging up on him, since he was the only person, among the many in the room, holding his particular views. Part of his vehemence, I now saw, came from fighting for survival under an unfair onslaught.

Brick by brick, Sam and I are rebuilding the foundations of our friendship, yet I don't want soon to forget what I learned that Easter Sunday. I can't live by Sam's principles. But I'm not living by my own if I aim simply to defeat his or any with which I disagree. Why would I think global conflicts might be resolved without force unless I can do better than want to bring about the scorched-earth defeat of a friend turned enemy—a friend who in this case intends, just as I do, to live by the light he has been given?

Why would I think global conflicts might be resolved without force unless I can do better than want to bring about the scorched-earth defeat of a friend turned enemy?

I do believe my country is implicated in troubling things these days, maybe even war crimes. But I also intend to work at living within the riddle of how to stand for peace in a peaceful way. That means I must, painfully and paradoxically, remain open to the possibility that those who favor war have something to teach me. I must remain ever aware of what I can learn from Sam—as well as from those who in what I worry are war crimes may see the sword of God. Otherwise I simply commit my own version of war crimes by rejoining that age-old human quest to vanquish the evil enemy with my unquestioned and unquestionable righteousness. Otherwise I assault the other precisely in the name of ending assaults. TM

Michael A. King, Telford, Pa., is pastor at Spring Mount (Pa.) Mennonite Church, editor of DreamSeeker Magazine *and author of* Fractured Dance: Gadamer and a Mennonite Conflict over Homosexuality.

We need not fear change

D. Duane Oswald is moderator of Mennonite Church USA.

Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?—Isaiah 43:18-19a

Becoming a missional church is one of the three priorities of Mennonite Church USA. As I travel around, I see much evidence of our becoming a missional church. Many congregations are seeking God's purpose for them in their communities. Many are looking beyond themselves to their relationships not only in their communities but also with other congregations in the worldwide Mennonite family.

Some congregations, however, appear vibrant yet seem unable to change, stuck in the "way it has always been." Some say it is pastoral leadership that moves a congregation. But it is within each of us to be receptive to change.

Change makes us move outside our comfort zone and view the world differently. Mennonite Church USA has gone through significant changes. We long for stability. Many of us are tired of change or dislike the pace of change. Yet change is necessary for growth. If we fail to embrace change, it will inevitably destroy us.

Look at change in terms of contraction and expansion. In contraction we are into ourselves—contracted, dense and impermeable. In expansion we are open, permeable. The more contracted we are, the more threatened by change. The more expanded we are, the more open to change. To the fearful, change is threatening, because things may get worse. To the hopeful, change is encouraging, because things could get better. To the confident, change is inspiring, because the challenge exists to improve things. If we are fearful, we see difficulties in every opportunity. If we are free of fear, we see opportunities in every difficulty. Most of us are somewhere between these two extremes.

Many of our congregations are trying to become missional, to grow and change. Change is a movement from where we are to where we want to be. Change is not an outcome or something to acquire but a shift in our understanding of our relationship in the world. We are either in more relationship or less relationship. Change is in us, not out there. The key is our attitude toward change and our acceptance or rejection of change. Change is nothing in and of itself. Change is life.

> **With our firm foundation of Jesus Christ and his saving grace, we are free to think outside the box, to be creative, receptive and move out of our comfort zones.**

As Mennonite Church USA, we have a firm foundation, Jesus Christ our Lord. How can change hurt us or our foundation? With such a foundation, we can be free and open to change. Because we are clear about who we are, we need not feel threatened. As we have gone through the transformation process, a time of significant growth and change for our denomination, we have not changed our foundation. We have worked at organizational processes and at ways of managing the church's many activities. Our Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective and our Vision: Healing and Hope statement have served us well as part of our foundation. Mennonite World Conference and the development of our seven core convictions have aided us in this process and provided further foundation from which we can be open to the Holy Spirit's creative activity in the world.

As our individual congregations work at becoming more missional in our community settings, let us be open to the leading of God's Spirit. Let us not be contracted but expanded. With our firm foundation of Jesus Christ and his saving grace, we are free to think outside the box, to be creative, receptive and move out of our comfort zones. We have said that God was taking us places we did not anticipate and moving us in directions we had not envisioned. Can we allow God to lead us as a church and as individual congregations, to be open to the Holy Spirit to create new opportunities for our ministry in the world?

The transformation process is not complete. Let's embrace change not for change's sake but rather to free us to new possibilities and new ways of being missional. We can be secure in our foundation, knowing God is with us. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **When there is no burning bush**—Eddy Hall
- **From Manchester to Mennonites**—Philip Wood
- **Organizing my life so that God can give me away**—Laurie L. Oswald

Gulf States members lose insurance

New company says, 'We must choose wisely how to expand our territory.'

Dave Weaver, chairman of the leadership committee in the Gulf States Mennonite Conference, is on a crusade. His objective is to find property insurance for members of his conference. His target: Mutual Aid eXchange (MAX) of Overland Park, Kan.

"It's an injustice," says Weaver, describing how his members are not able to get insurance from MAX—a newly formed mutual aid organization that claims to provide "state-of-the-art insurance with a strong commitment to Anabaptist values."

The saga started to unfold last fall when members of his conference received notices from Mennonite Property Aid—one of 10 smaller mutual aid organizations that morphed into a larger entity known as MAX. The notices, which Weaver describes as pink slips, announced the end of insurance coverage.

"Just out of the blue. No notice up front," says Weaver. "We had no way of knowing this was coming or why."

That's when Weaver started his campaign of sending out letters to Mennonite leaders complaining about the lack of insurance coverage. The responses consisted of "we can't afford it" and "it is going to cost too much," says Weaver. Jim Miller, chief operations officer at MAX, wrote that "MAX has to make difficult decisions on which states should be licensed. We must choose wisely how to expand our territory so that profits will help MAX strengthen its surplus and provide us a stable foundation for future growth."

Weaver, who is also associate pastor of Gulf Haven Mennonite Church in Gulfport, Miss., says the Gulf States Conference has more minorities and people in low-income brackets than other Mennonite Church USA conferences. He says he has to face members each Sunday who do not have enough money to pay insurance premiums. This prompted him to continue with his campaign.

Jim Gascho, chairman of the board at MAX, is surprised by the negative comments expressed by Weaver and others. For starters, Gascho says MAX has never been in the Gulf States.

"So it is not a matter of MAX dropping the Gulf States," Gascho says.

He explains that one of the regional mutual aid organizations that came together to form MAX had been doing business in that region. But he says MAX is not able to take on those policy holders because it has not been authorized yet by regulators in those states.

"We have worked very hard with them and those member companies [to help find insurance products for members in the Gulf States]," says Gascho. "So that is misinformation if anyone is saying that MAX dropped those states."

MAX is a reciprocal form of insurance and is owned by the policy holders who elect the board members. It is not controlled by Mennonite Church USA or any other denomination. It is regulated on a state-by-state process and is currently authorized in 13 states.

Gascho says MAX currently covers about 75 percent of the Anabaptist population and is working on getting authorization to provide coverage in other states. According to Gascho, MAX Insurance Agency is now licensed in Mississippi.

"The reality of it is that you can't gain authority in all states right at the beginning," he says. "It's nice to be wanted. They see benefit of church-related property and casualty mutual aid and they want that available. But it is not a matter of MAX pulling out of those states. We've never been there. That is a pretty serious misconception."

But this explanation provides little comfort for leaders who tried to find other insurance coverage for members in the Gulf States.

"In the meantime, [everyone in] Mississippi … got dropped, and our people all had to go scrambling to get insurance in other places," says Duane Maust, moderator of the conference, after hearing the explanation from MAX.

Despite his efforts on behalf of Gulf States members, Weaver says he is not holding out much hope for the future when it comes to insurance coverage.

"They feel like the church has just dumped on us and they don't care about us," says Weaver. "They have just walked off and left us."—*Brian R. Hook, a freelance journalist*

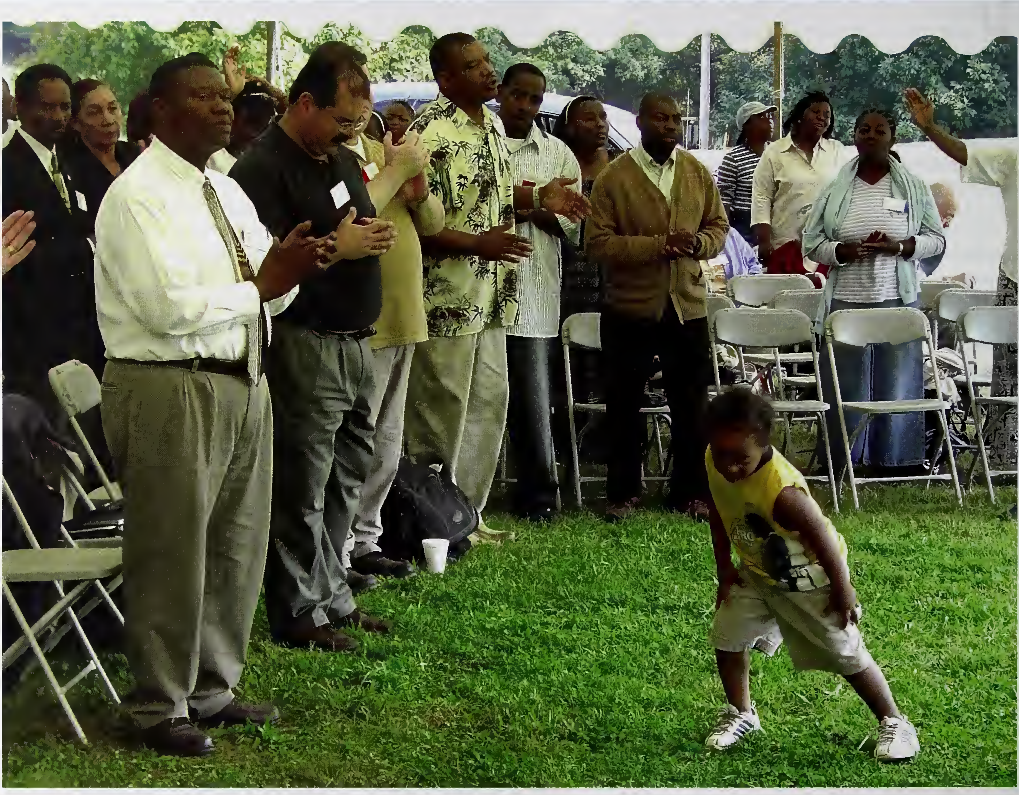
We had no way of knowing this was coming.
—Dave Weaver

Gulf States Mennonite Conference

- **Founded in 1979**
- **Members: 654**
- **Congregations: 14**
- **Moderator: Duane Maust**

LOUISIANA
MISSISSIPPI
ALABAMA
GULF OF MEXICO

New York City Council of Churches meets at Camp Deerpark after flood



Above: Quincy Smith, a 3-year-old from King of Glory Tabernacle, dances to the beat of praise songs during the afternoon worship service. Noel Santiago (second from left in front row), conference minister of Franconia Mennonite Conference, was the resource person for the Sept. 25 gathering.

Right: Children from several New York City churches provide special music during an afternoon worship service planned by the youth.

All photos by Everett J. Thomas

Seventeen congregations from Lancaster (Pa.) and Atlantic Coast conferences have been meeting for fellowship since 1980, now sponsor upstate-New York camp and Menno House

"Ask the Bishops" was the name of an afternoon exercise the New York City Council of Churches tried for the first time (photo at right). Questions ranged from how Mennonites should vote in the upcoming national election to what Mennonite Church USA believes about homosexuality to how New York City churches can address issues of racism in the denomination.

The New York City Council of Churches was formed in 1980 and is comprised of 11 congregations from Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference and six congregations from Atlantic Coast Conference. The group meets each fall at Camp Deerpark near Westbrookville, N.Y. The Sept. 25 meeting was almost cancelled because the camp received seven inches of rain in one hour on Aug. 30, causing a small stream behind the main lodge to overflow and flood the building. However, during the week after the storm, 150 volunteers showed up to clean the layers of mud and debris. The camp and Menno House, a lodging facility in Manhattan, are the two programs currently operated by the council. Ruth Yoder Wenger, pastor of the North Bronx Mennonite Church, serves as the council's moderator.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Above: "Ask The Bishops" participants (from left): Atlantic Coast Conference administrator Miriam Martin, Lancaster Conference bishops Monroe Yoder, Nicolas Angustia and Michael Banks

Above: Members of the board for *The Mennonite* visit during lunch with Connie Benson (left) from the Seventh Avenue Mennonite Church. Board members (from left) are Larry Miller, Susan Sommer, Barth Hague and Joe Roos. The building in the background was flooded by a storm several weeks before the gathering.

Left: Three youth recited original peace poems during a youth-planned worship service. From left: Devonne Lila McMorris from King of Glory Tabernacle, Kirsten Wenger from North Bronx Mennonite Church and Darnell Wolfe from King of Glory Tabernacle

Students learn about hymns

Fern Clemmer

Bethel College (North Newton, Kan.) choral director William Eash leads Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School students in singing a cappella hymns

Bethel College professor sparks interest in a cappella singing.

He came with a challenging mission: to inspire high school students to a new appreciation for a cappella hymn singing in community. During three days of Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School chapel services, Bethel College (North Newton, Kan.) choral director William Eash shared the stories and history behind some of our favorite hymns.

For example, "Amazing Grace" was written by a transformed slave trader, Eash says. He also told stories about people such as Katie Green, an old woman he knew who sang her heart out in spite of her less-than-perfect singing voice. Between stories, Eash led the audience in singing the songs and thinking about the meaning of the words. In a school where participation in hymn singing was waning, students were suddenly singing again—out loud.

"He took hymns and made them come alive," says senior Weston Shertzer. "I really enjoyed singing hymns with new vigor."

"It made you think more about what you were singing," says senior Julia Mickley who admitted she was skeptical at first that Eash could really engage a group of nearly 800 high-school students. But she ended up rating the chapels the best of the year. "I'm so thankful he came to the school," Mickley says.

Shertzer and Mickley believe it won't be easy to keep up that level of enthusiasm, and Eash agrees.

"When we sing we are doing a complex task and if we don't continue to cultivate those skills, this gift of singing will be taken from us," he said. "I see that happening now" and expressed surprise at the limited number of hymns the students knew. Eash said that cultivation must start at the congregational level, where parishioners must be more than spectators.—*Fern Clemmer of Lancaster Mennonite School News Service*

He took hymns and made them come alive.
—Weston Shertzer

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Gather at the cross

West African custom is focus of week

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School's entire student body—430 strong—grasped a towering cross or stretched out their hands toward it.

"Through this act of coming together, we were all physically plugged into the cross and connecting with the world church," said Mennonite Mission Network's senior executive for Global Ministries James Krabill.

Gathering around the cross is part of every service in the Harrist Church, an African-Initiated Church where Krabill's family worshiped during their 14 years of service in the Ivory Coast.

Krabill addressed the students of the Lansdale, Pa., school during Spiritual Life Week, Sept. 20-24. He challenged students with experiences from his ministry in West Africa and his passion for the worldwide church. At the end of a week that included five chapel presentations, speaking in 15 classes and meeting with students, teachers and local pastors, Krabill summed up his messages by inviting the Christopher Dock community to reach for the cross standing in the middle of the auditorium. Students and faculty joined together in prayer, connecting with each other and the worldwide church.

"It was really rejuvenating for our school to have [Krabill] come and remind us all about what God does for us and what we can do to get involved to help God and the church," says Andy Richter, a ninth-grader from Perkasie, Pa.

In a student-led chapel, Kim Wilkinson, a junior from Harleysville, Pa., reiterated Krabill's challenge to her classmates. "Don't be afraid to lean back into the past," she said, "as you find hope in those [who have gone] before you, as you lunge into the future."—*Lynda Hollinger Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network News Service*

Steffi Eger

Dressed in his West African garb, James Krabill, Spiritual Life Week speaker at Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, leads students across campus.

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SWITZERLAND, FRANCE and GERMANY for GRANDPARENTS/GRANDCHILDREN/FAMILIES (June 14-21)
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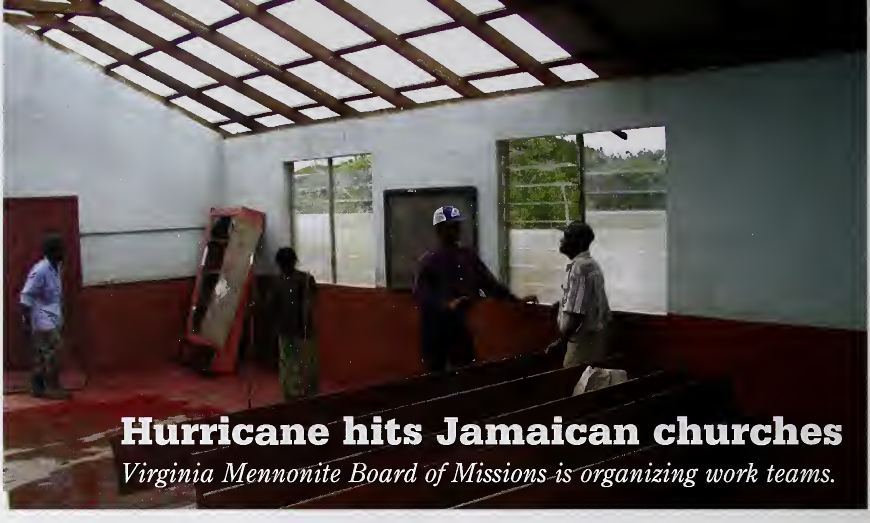

Jamaica Mennonite Church president Richie Tyson (in baseball hat) talks with Abrams Mennonite Church members about needed repairs on their building.

Hurricane hits Jamaican churches

Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions is organizing work teams.

As Hurricane Ivan unleashed its fury on southwest Jamaica, the many buildings damaged included three Mennonite churches that sustained roof damage and Maranatha School for the Deaf, where the storm tore the roofs off three buildings. Over the weekend of Sept. 10-11, many crops and trees were damaged in the rural area of St. Elizabeth, and loss of electric power and phone lines cut communication links to the rest of the island and other countries.

A pastor's family weathered the storm in an unfinished house because they felt the roof there was stronger than where they usually live. Saying Psalm 23 over and over and singing "He's got the wind and the rain in his hands" comforted the parents while their four children slept through the din of pounding rain on the tin roof.

"Jesus is my father and he took care of us," says Maxine Smith, who pastors the Salter's Hill Mennonite Church with her husband, Donavan.

Jamaica Mennonite Church (JMC) leaders Richie Tyson and Douglas Senior surveyed the hurricane affects with Mennonite Central Committee country representative Ron Good, MCC hurricane specialist Marion Meyer, Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions Caribbean regional director Galen Lehman and VMBM board member Jim Hershberger. Both VMBM and MCC have longstanding relationships with Jamaica Mennonite Church.

MCC, VMBM and JMC personnel explored options for assisting with needs. With JMC's direction, work teams organized by VMBM for building reconstruction will be sent in the next months. Damage to church roofs will be repaired first; the Maranatha School for the Deaf will be the next major project. Both MCC and VMBM will give financial aid.

Emergency relief funds are being received by VMBM at 901 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, and MCC Caribbean Emergency Assistance Fund, call 888-563-4676 in the United States or in Canada, 888-622-6337.

People available to help rebuild may send contact information to info@vmbm.org.—*Gloria L. Lehman of Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions News Service*

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WORKERS

Blank, Bill, was installed and ordained Aug. 22 as pastor at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Baker, Kalia Lynn, Aug. 12, to Drew and Cammy Perez Baker, Salem, Ore.

Bergen, Tucker Jack, Sept. 4, to Brian and Angela Hiebner Bergen, Henderson, Neb.

Cressman, Elliot Sophia, Sept. 3, to James Cressman and Rachel Schmidt, Toronto.

Duerksen, Kjersti Grace, Sept. 7, to Logan and Tara Gore Duerksen, Larned, Kan.

Epp, Levi Michael, Dec. 16, 2003, received for adoption Sept. 13 by Michael and Glenda Syring Epp, Garden City, Kan.

Florez, Ethan Joel, July 23, to Jesse and Rashell Mininger Florez, Eaton, Colo.

Gale, Eliana Marie, July 7, to Timothy and Carol Shadoin Gale, Tiskilwa, Ill.

Horner, Ely Blake, Sept. 19, to Ty and Katie Krehbiel Horner, Minier, Ill.

Manyuon, Emmanuel Aleer, Sept. 14, to Rebecca Manyuon, Hatfield, Pa.

Mendenhall, Cale Julian, Sept. 19, to Brant and Angela Kneifel Mendenhall, Kouts, Ind.

Mummau, Julia Leanne, July 22, to Chris and Judy Geissinger Mummau, East Waterford, Pa.

Sabella, Abby Lynn, Sept. 15, to Jason and Cindy Gaff Sabella, Kouts, Ind.

Shenk, Austin Philip, July 17, to Jon and Kris Sommers Shenk, Ypsilanti, Mich.

Steffen, Daniel Roderick, June 20, to Rod and Janice Green Steffen, Frederick, Colo.

Strausz, Brady Benjamin, Sept. 17, to Casey and Teresa Burrow Strausz, Moundridge, Kan.

Thomas, Owen Mathew, Sept. 2, to Earl Thomas and Ruby Sinclair, Jerome, Pa.

Waltner, Matthew Aaron, July 29, to Gordon and Pamela Waltner, Hesson, Kan.

MARRIAGES

Baker/Peters: Scott Baker, Seattle, Wa., and Monica Peters, Seattle, Sept. 25 in Seattle.

Brenneman/Yoder: Beth Brenneman, Burkeville, Va., and Rusty Yoder, Farmville, Va., Sept. 4 at Pisgah Baptist Church, Rice, Va.

Boone/Knouse: Heather Boone, Spruce Hill, Pa., and Wesley Knouse, Richfield, Pa., July 10 at Lost Creek Mennonite Church, Mifflintown, Pa.

Bucher/Hoover: David Bucher, Fairfax, Va., and Sharon Hoover, Fairfax, Sept. 4 at Wakefield Chapel, Annondale, Va.

Christian/Mast: Matthew Christian, Wadsworth, Ohio, and Anita Mast, Newton, Kan., June 5 in Elkhart, Ind.

Connair/Frederick: Paul Connair and Carlie Frederick, Sept. 4 at Plains Mennonite Church, Hatfield, Pa.

Eby/Eisenstat: Sondra Eby, Harrisonburg, Va., and Daniel Eisenstat, Waynesburg, Pa., Sept. 5 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

Good/Tawes: Stefanie Good, Westover, Md., and Scott Tawes, Crisfield, Md., July 28 in Jamaica.

Groff/Ressler: Laura Groff, Intercourse, Pa., and Matt Ressler, New Holland, Pa., Sept. 11 at Paradise (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Hildebrant/Monson: Matthew Hildebrant, Salem, Ore., and Holly Monson, Priddis, Alberta, July 17 in Alberta.

Kauffman/Nofziger: Erin Kauffman, Dalton, Ohio, and Glenn Nofziger, West Unity, Ohio, July 25 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Martin/Vinson: Michael J. Martin, Ephrata, Pa., and Erin Vinson, Akron, Pa., Aug. 14 at Ephrata Mennonite Church.

DEATHS

Baer, Myrtie Frey, 85, Archbold, Ohio, died Sept. 14. Spouse: Lawrence J. Baer (deceased). Parents: E.B. and Fannie Rupp Frey. Children: Linda Wenger, Miriam, Esther Lewis, Connie Blake, Edward; 14 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 18 at West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Bergen, Benhard, 82, Henderson, Neb., died Sept. 24. Parents: Dietrich and Elizabeth Ott Bergen. Funeral: Sept. 27 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Neb.

Bolton, Alice Moyer, 83, Perkasie, Pa., died Sept. 20. Spouse: (1st) Stanley Rosenberger (deceased), (2nd) Charles Bolton (deceased). Parents: Calvin D. and Frieda Snyder Moyer. Child: Shirley Rush; step-children: Lydia Landis, Irene Dorville, Charles, Edgar, David, Ray; five grandchildren; 21 step-grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; 49 step-great-grandchildren; seven step-great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 24 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Burkholder, Naomi Catherine Knicely, 84, Harrisonburg, Va., died Aug. 31. Spouse: William H. (Bill) Burkholder. Parents: Fielding (Phil) Harrison and Sarah Magdalene Wenger Knicely. Children: Gloria Derrico, Billy, Joy Kanagy, Twila Adkins; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 3 at Weavers Mennonite Cemetary, Harrisonburg.

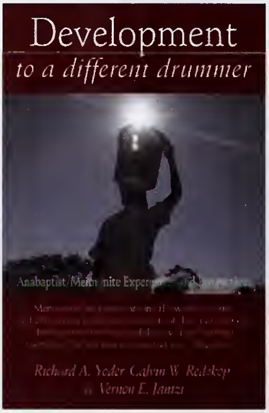
Ford, William Everett, 80, Elkhart, Ind., died Sept. 14. Spouse: Helen L. Sanders Ford. Parents: Willie and Carrie Elliott Ford. Children: Brenda Elliot, Douglas, John, Mark Stephen; nine grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 18 at Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Geisinger, Effie Yoder, 84, Dalton, Ohio, died Aug. 30 of cancer. Spouse: Laurence Geisinger (deceased). Parents: Alpheus and Elnora Yoder. Children: Connie, Calvin, Dean; two step-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 3 at Smithville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Goertzen, Vicki, 46, Goessel, Kan., died Sept. 10 of complications from diabetes. Parents: Franklin and Eleanora Unruh Goertzen. Funeral: Sept. 13 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Graber, Doris Hostetter, 61, Phoenix, Ariz., died Aug. 30 of cancer. Spouse: Ray Graber. Parents: Ira and Verna Hostetter. Children: Tonya Rae Risser, Timothy Allen; four grandchildren. Memorial service: Sept. 2 at Sunnyslope Mennonite Church, Phoenix.

Horst, Cleason, 88, Cambridge, Ont., died Aug. 22. Spouse: Erma Snyder Horst. Parents: John and Mary Frey Horst. Children: Roger, Richard, Darrell, Marlin; two grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 25 at St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church.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Hostetler, Leroy L., 100, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 15. Spouse: Louella Eash (deceased). Parents: Levi S. and Nancy Gingrich Hostetler. Children: Norman E., David L., Jack, Carol Clark-Yeomans; 15 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; five great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 17 at Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Hottinger, Gladys Virginia Bynaker, 83, Broadway, Va., died Sept. 14. Spouse: Owen Hottinger (deceased). Parents: Samuel and Martha Shirkey Bynaker. Children: Irene C. Thompson, David W., Everette L., Gerald D., Joseph E.; 13 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 17 at Zion Mennonite Church, Broadway.

Kenagy, Helen Marie Hartzler, 64, Carlsbad, N.M., died July 23. Spouse: Marvin Kenagy. Parents: C.V. and Nellie Hartzler. Children: Becky Doggett, Wayne, Brenda Asher, Karla Simpson; 12 grandchildren. Funeral: July 28 at Carlsbad Mennonite Church.

Landis, Mervin W., 84, Akron, Pa., died Sept. 24 of cancer. Spouse: A. Miriam Ressler (deceased). Parents: J. Ellis and Esther Landis. Children: M. Douglas, Janet Lapp, JoAnn Piotrowski; four grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 29 at Mellinger Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Landis, Norman S., 86, Lancaster, Pa., died Sept. 27. Spouse: Grace D. Denlinger Landis. Parents: John J. and Nora S. Stauffer Landis. Children: Merie L. Kreider, Elaine L. Hollinger, Clair D.; 18 grandchildren; 40 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 1 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Linscheid, Elma Friesen, 89, Aberdeen, Idaho, died Sept. 15. Spouse: Marvin Linscheid (deceased). Parents: John and Katie Ensz Friesen. Child: Don; three grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 20 at First Mennonite Church, Aberdeen.

Mann, Mary Magdalena, 92, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 6. Parents: Tobias E. and Saloma Eckhart Mann. Funeral: Sept. 19 at Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Peterson, Patricia Vargo, 56, Scottdale, Pa., died Sept. 26 of cancer. Parents: John and Geneva Burkey Vargo. Children: Mary Walczak, Richy, Tami Mitchell; three grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 28 at Scottdale Mennonite Church.

Roth, Milan, 47, Wayland, Iowa, died Aug. 28. Spouse: Linda Hauenstein Roth. Parents: Allen and Evelyn Nebel Roth. Children: Keisha, Chayse. Funeral: Aug. 31 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Swartz, Fannie Jantzi, 81, Middlebury, Ind., died Sept. 9. Spouse: (1st) Arthur Litwiller (deceased), (2nd) John Swartz (deceased). Parents: John and Fanny Troyer Jantzi. Children: Betty Beiler, Nancy Kauffman, Twila Seland, Lavern, Carl Litwiller, Glen Litwiller, Arnold, Clifford Litwiller, Larry Litwiller; 31 grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 18 at Riverside Mennonite Church, Au Gres, Mich.

Wedel, Florence Dougherty, 75, Winnie, Texas, died June 23. Spouse: Henry Wedel (deceased). Parents: Charles and Louisa Reddy Dougherty. Children: Wayne, Stewart, Janice Regier; nine grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 28 at Turpin (Okla.) Mennonite Church.

Whitmer, Frieda Farmwald, 78, Dublin, Ohio, died Sept. 19. Spouse: Pete Whitmer (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Emma Miller Farmwald. Children: Mark, Don, John, Jerry; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 22 at Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City, Ohio.

Yoder, Emma, 90, Hartville, Ohio, died Sept. 6. Spouse: William Yoder (deceased). Parents: John and Katie Miller Stutzman. Children: Mildred Miller, Eileen, Erma Hostetler, Miriam Sommers, David, Mary Catherine (deceased); 17 grandchildren; 30 great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 9 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Hartville.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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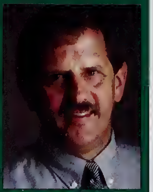

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Bluffton University invites applications for a ***tenure-track position in creative writing fiction*** in a growing English department with a new writing major, beginning fall 2005. Secondary expertise preferred in British literature. Position includes general education courses in Humanities I (through the Renaissance) and composition. M.F.A. or Ph.D. required. Salary is commensurate with background and experience within the university pay scale. Review of applications begins Nov. 1 and continues until an appointment is made. For information see www.bluffton.edu. Send letter of interest, vita, three letters of reference (submitted directly from the referee), and official transcripts to Elaine Suderman, Administrative Assistant for Academic Affairs, Bluffton University, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, OH 45817-2104. EOE. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply.

Mennonite Central Committee is accepting applications for the position of ***MCC Central States executive director.*** The director provides vision and oversight for all MCC programs in Central States. Familiarity with MCC constituency, strong relational administrative skills and cultural competency required. Experience with budgeting, administration, Spanish language skills preferred. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply. Significant travel time within the United States.

Contact Charmayne Brubaker, 717-859-1151, cdb@mcc.org or your nearest MCC office for the full job description. Application review begins immediately. Position available Jan. 1, 2005, or sooner, if possible.

Norristown New Life, a 115-member, urban, multicultural, Spanish-English congregation, is seeking a half-time (2.5 days per week) ***bilingual Hispanic associate pastor*** to serve as a member of our pastoral leadership team. We are prayerfully seeking someone who is able to work with a leadership team, has a passion for evangelism and community outreach, is gifted in both preaching and teaching, has a vision for urban church growth, is flexible and spiritually mature, has an Anabaptist understanding and commitment.

For more information, please contact Adamino Ortiz, Search Committee Chair, Nueva Vida Norristown New Life, 3 E. Marshall St., Norristown, PA 19401, email Adamino@fast.net or NNL3@juno.com.

Two positions available: **Spruce Lake Retreat,** a dynamic, multifaceted camp ministry affiliated with the Mennonite Church, seeks two mission-minded people for two positions:

Full-time maintenance technician will serve on the buildings and grounds team, responsible for the upkeep and development of Spruce Lake's property, plant and equipment. Applicant should be a team player and have experience/training in building and/or grounds-related tasks.

Part-time housekeeping manager oversees the housekeeping and janitorial staff to ensure the interior cleanliness of Spruce Lake's guest rooms and buildings. Applicant should have strong organizational and relational skills.

Spruce Lake offers a competitive wage and liberal benefits package. On-site housing available. Couples are welcome to apply. EOE. Both positions open immediately. Spruce Lake is located in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. Send resumé to Executive Director, RR 1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; phone 800-822-7505; email director@sprucelake.org.

Western Mennonite School board of directors and the executive director have announced an applicant search for the ***academic principal*** position. Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students both local and at a distance. Located on 45 acres in the Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience with a comprehensive vision for expanding enrollment, program and facilities. The application deadline is Dec. 15. For information call 866-343-9378 or email wmsoffice@teleport.com.

Friends in Travel, interdenominational guided tour. Chile, Argentina and Peru, Feb. 25-March 16. Seats available. Call immediately 717-656-7483.

West Clinton Mennonite Church, located in rural northwest Ohio, is seeking an energetic, spiritually motivated, fun-loving individual who is gifted in working with youth and young adults to fill an ***associate pastor*** role. For further information contact Marvin Leatherman at 419-335-2221 or leather@bright.net.

Eastern Mennonite University announces faculty openings beginning Fall 2005.

Computer science/computer information systems: Full-time continuing faculty position in computer science/computer information systems. Ph.D. or Ph.D. candidacy in CS or CIS required; master's degree in CS or CIS with related doctorate also acceptable. Teaching assignment includes introductory to advanced level courses in computer science and computer information systems (12 hours per semester).

English: Full-time, continuing position in composition and rhetoric. Ph.D. required, with preference for candidates with secondary expertise in English language or early American literature. The new faculty member will provide leadership for EMU's cross-curricular writing initiative, coordinate writing assistance in the academic support center and teach classes in composition, grammar and literature for a total of 12 hours each semester.

Marketing: Full-time, continuing faculty position in marketing. Ph.D. in marketing or related field required. Teaching and industry experience preferred. Seeking a candidate with strong background in marketing to teach undergraduate and graduate level courses from introductory to advanced-level concepts in marketing, including consumer behavior and international marketing.

Photographer/digital media: Full-time, continuing faculty position in photography and digital media. M.F.A. required. M.A. in photography with related Ph.D. considered. Seeking a candidate with strong background in photography and digital media to teach entry level through advanced art and communication courses. Familiarity with black and white photography processes, color photography using digital darkroom, Photoshop and the basics of graphic design required.

Theater: Full-time, continuing faculty position in theater. M.F.A. or Ph.D. with university teaching experience required and professional theater experience preferred. Primary responsibilities include teaching theater courses and directing one play per year. Teaching assignment includes introduction to theater and survey history courses in both Western and non-Western theater. The new faculty member will take leadership in further development of an undergraduate theater program that serves students from across the liberal arts curriculum. Applicants must welcome the opportunity to teach and create theater in the context of an Anabaptist-Mennonite university.

World religions: Full-time, continuing faculty position in world religions or related field/anthropology. Requirements include Ph.D. or Ph.D. candidate in religion/anthropology and expertise in cross-cultural and two-thirds world issues. Seeking a candidate with commitment to Anabaptist-Mennonite theological and missiological perspectives, with significant cross-cultural ministry/scholarly experience. Teaching assignment includes the core course in world religions for all Bible and religion majors and other religion/anthropology courses. Must be willing to teach additional Bible and religion courses within the general education curriculum.

Responsibilities for each position also include student advising, university service and ongoing scholarship.

EMU seeks faculty with evidence or promise of teaching excellence in a Christian, liberal arts environment, committed to ongoing scholarship, who are familiar with and supportive of Anabaptist-Mennonite Christian faith practices. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to Marie S. Morris, Vice President and Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or email ugdean@emu.edu. Visit www.emu.edu online. Review begins Nov. 1, 2004. EMU reserves the right to fill the positions at any time or keep the positions open. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity.

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The loneliness of the Christian artist

Gordon Houser

Thanks to my friend Fred Loganbill, I learned about one more case of a Christian artist caught between a rock and a hard place, between the two subcultures of secular humanism and conservative Christianity. It can be a lonely, powerless place.

The artist in question is film director Wim Wenders, who grew up in Germany but has lived in Los Angeles the past eight years. Leah McLaren interviewed him in *The Globe and Mail* (Sept. 18) during the Toronto Film Festival.

Wenders was at the festival to promote his latest film, *Land of Plenty*, which, writes McLaren, "tells the story of an idealistic young missionary named Lana, who is seeking out her estranged Uncle Paul, a Vietnam veteran and self-appointed homeland-security officer."

Wenders is perhaps best-known for *Wings of Desire*, a spiritual fairy tale that is one of my favorite films. His new film, he says, is "character-driven." He describes Lana as having "a very innocent, almost childlike faith in God, ... whereas Paul is not really a spiritual person. You might say his religion is America."

Wenders goes on to lament that Christianity in the United States has become defined by a certain right-wing politics. "For me as a Christian," he says, "it's really revolting, and it's one of the reasons I made this film: I wanted to show that as a Christian you have to have different priorities. As a Christian, the idea of a preemptive war was out of the question. As a Christian, you have to be in solidarity with the poor and the exploited, and I didn't really see that in America anymore."

In spite of critical applause and warm audience response at film festivals in Toronto and Venice, *Land of Plenty* has no North American buyer, which means you won't be seeing the film anytime soon.

The American buyers, Wenders says, are "insecure how to market it. Apparently the Christian message and the liberal message are considered incompatible." He says he's been told that "Christian ideas are so occupied by the right wing in America that they don't know what to do with it."

Conservative Christianity has gained much power in U.S. politics and in the marketplace. And the film industry is still mainly controlled by people who have little understanding or empathy for Christian faith. People like Wenders, and he's not alone, get caught in the middle.

Many Mennonites may come to relate to him, according to several speakers at a Believers Church Conference held Sept. 23-25 at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. One said, "Those who attempt to follow the way of Jesus today must expect opposition from the state." Another said that persecution and hardship "come naturally if you live out the heart of your faith."

Not finding a North American distributor for one's film may not be persecution and hardship, but antiwar Christians may find themselves increasingly out of step with U.S. culture, either because they are antiwar or because they are Christian.

That can be a good thing. Perhaps the greatest temptation for Christians in the United States, other than consumerism, is power. Sadly, many have succumbed, adopting the methods and hateful language of the wider culture on the way to gaining the power of influence in the political landscape. For many, it seems, the end justifies the means. How soon we lose sight of the cross and lift up a sword of power.

Regardless of Wenders' politics, we are poorer without having greater access to his artistic vision. Increasingly our culture has become polarized between categories such as right and left or secular and Christian. Unfortunately, we don't take the care to define those terms, and they become empty stereotypes.

Artists—and Christians—are called to break stereotypes, to help us question how we see the world and become more humane, more human.

FILMS

We Don't Live Here Anymore (R), based on two short stories by André Dubus, takes on the subject of adultery. Unlike many other films, it pays close attention to the pain and destruction caused by people following their desires instead of their commitments. The acting is superb, and the script carefully avoids both a didactic and a sentimental tone. A harsh sin is treated with appropriately realistic harshness.

VIDEOS

Mean Girls (PG-13) is a satirical look at a serious subject—the way high school girls treat each other. The script (based on the book *Queen Bees and Wannabes* by Rosalind Wiseman), by Tina Fey, who writes for Saturday Night Live and who appears in the film, is by turns hilarious and insightful but rarely sentimental. The action is over-the-top—it's satire, after all—yet it introduces an issue too often neglected by adults.

BOOKS

Two new books for this season are **Autumn: A Spiritual Biography of the Season**, edited by Gary Schmidt and Susan M. Felch (SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2004, $22.99), and **Autumn Years: Taking the Contemplative Path** by Robert H. King and Elizabeth M. King (Continuum, 2004, $17.95). **Autumn** collects essays and poetry by various writers under five categories—change, endings, work, harvest and thanksgiving—and includes illustrations by Mary Azarian. Writers include E.B. White, Ann Lamott, Wendell Berry, May Sarton, John Keats, Robert Frost, Henry David Thoreau, Julian of Norwich and David Kline. **Autumn Years** addresses those in the second half of life. The authors—married to each other—use their experiences to describe the practice of contemplation as a strategy of successful aging. You'll encounter many insights, including the importance of a person's 61st birthday in Japanese culture.

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Everett J. Thomas

Why we stayed

A small denomination with unity is better than a larger group with disunity. Some 115,000 Mennonites forming Mennonite Church USA are demonstrating the point. We lost members in the merger-integration-transformation process, but those remaining now have greater unity in their commitment to this new church family.

In recent months three more conferences—Franklin, Lancaster and South Central—decided to become members of Mennonite Church USA. North Central Conference, the last remaining provisional member, may join next summer. If that happens, we will know who belongs to our denominational family several years early. The deadline for joining is 2007, but these early decisions indicate solid support for this part of the global Mennonite church and reveal reasons to belong.

But first, a look at the numbers: In 1997, when General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church delegates voted to form separate entities in Canada and the United States, the 21 conferences in the United States claimed approximately 140,000 members. According to the Mennonite Church USA 2004 Directory, these same 21 conferences now claim about 115,000 members (in both years members in dual-conference congregations were counted twice).

The question is not, Why did some leave? The question now is, Why did the rest of us stay?

The question is not, Why did some 20,000 sisters and brothers leave? The question now is, Why did the rest of us stay?

Several compelling answers came from South Central Conference (SCC), which decided in July to become a member.

"Being part of the larger church," said SCC moderator Eber Ramer after his conference's vote in July, "will help us find leaders, bring us teaching resources and help us discern biblically our direction in the context of the larger community."

All three of these reasons are critical to the identity of any congregation. Furthermore, this is the kind of perspective the new denomination needs from conference leaders to help congregations view the church more broadly than realities they experience at the local level.

Pastoral leadership is the most important. When a congregation does not hold a high view of Mennonite theology and identity, the congregation usually hires a pastor who cares little about Anabaptist convictions and our confessional statements. Some congregations that are now not part of Mennonite Church USA left because their leaders led them to other traditions that hold convictions at variance with the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.

If the choice of pastor is most important for the long-term trajectory of a congregation, teaching resources is a close second. These resources include more than Sunday school material, but the Christian education hour on Sunday morning is critically important for adults, youth and children. In the next decade, creating and selling a new Sunday school curriculum for children will be one of the most important projects for Mennonite Publishing Network, since it is the centerpiece of spiritual formation in the congregation. The MPN fund-raising campaign for this curriculum deserves generous support from us all.

The third reason for joining Mennonite Church USA mitigates against excessive congregationalism. Ramer said Mennonite Church USA will "help us discern biblically our direction in the context of the larger community."

Just as a congregation subordinates its interpretation of Scripture within the larger community of faith, a conference must be willing to submit its discernment to the national community of faith. By deciding to become a member of Mennonite Church USA, a conference acknowledges that it needs this broader context as the reference point for seeking God's will.

The values of denominational membership emerged afresh during decision-making processes in many area conferences. We thank God for a renewed commitment from all who chose to join this new creation. God's Spirit has transformed the U.S. parts of General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church into a vibrant and healthy Mennonite Church USA.—*ejt*

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Beyond our limitedness—part 1

Karl McKinney, former co-pastor at Reba Place of Rogers Park in Chicago, now works for Mennonite Mission Network.

Son of man, can these bones become living people again?—Ezekiel 37:3 (NLT)

Have you ever been weak, helpless, zombie-like, even at the point of death? Have you come to the end of your strength and ability?

One day I was sitting on the floor in our bedroom. Kellie came into the room, went to her bureau, took something from a drawer and turned around. She stood on one side of our large bed, and I sat on the floor on the other side of our bed, my back against my bureau. She worked on something else. A long moment passed before I spoke to her. I don't recall what I said, but she was startled by the sound of my voice because until then she did not know I was in the room.

I had become so quiet in the depth of my think hole, Kellie was unaware I was in the room. All my action was inside my head and soul. My thoughts brooded over the valleys and mountains of stuff I was buried under that day. I did not want to be buried anymore but could see no way to get out from under it all. My mind could not concentrate clearly enough on any of those things to start tasks my frail body might not even finish.

We must rediscover that God alone is the solution to human limitedness.

For months I had worked long hours, slept little, ate meagerly, kept up with the family and added to my workload. Also I had assumed new responsibilities in the city, within our congregation and in our conference. Not only did my schedule overtax me, the pace did not appear to be slowing any time soon. Sitting there, I was at a low point in energy and experiencing the limited nature of my strength and ability.

The depth of my frailty overwhelmed me, but I turned on the television and heard a story about a man who also had reached a point of limitedness. I identified with him. In my frailty I said aloud, "He has reached his point of limit." I then asked, What is beyond my limits, God?

Sometime after asking that question, I heard, as though audibly in the room, "I am beyond your limits."

I will always treasure those words.

Daily those words speak to me when I reach points of limitedness within me and within the world. I am so out of line according to who I should be, the world is so out of line with what it should be that these words minister to my indescribable frustration and pain.

Many of us have reached points of limit in our ability and strength. What if the same source refreshes the limited and remedies the limitedness of individuals and all creation? "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" (Psalm 23). "I will be their shepherd," declares the Lord (Ezekiel 34).

It is inconceivable that the disorder of life and creation could not be addressed by its Creator. It is inconceivable that the yearning within the human heart for beauty, perfection, love, justice, peace, righteousness and eternal life could ever be fulfilled by multiple sources.

Our conversation must be with One Author of all creation, and that is part of why we must neither invest our expectations in false sources nor direct our imprecations to created things. We must rediscover that God alone is the solution to human limitedness.

What limits are you facing now? Have you called upon the only God? What will you have to experience before you know that God alone is the Lord?

TheMennonite

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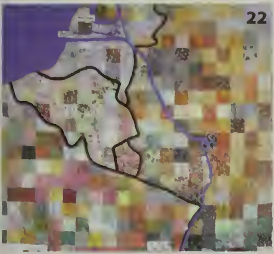
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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Anabaptists in an American democracy

Re "Anabaptist Faith and American Democracy" (Oct. 5): As one who has advocated speaking both a "first" and a "second" language in addressing public-policy questions, I find many of the concerns in this article at the same time valid and misdirected. Insofar as the article is aimed at my work, it seems to represent either a misreading of it at important points or an interpretation of its implications that I find mistaken at important points. Before simply accepting Grimsrud's perspectives, I encourage interested readers to look at my essay in the January 2003 *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (www.goshen.edu/mqr/pastissues/jan03 koontz.html) and then form your own judgments. Grimsrud responded to my essay at greater length in *MQR* (July 2004, not yet online.) These are matters about which we need ongoing discernment as Christian believers in the Anabaptist-Mennonite family.—*Ted Koontz, Elkhart, Ind.*

I join Ted Grimsrud in searching for a better model than "two-kingdom" theology—the state as well as the church can learn much from Jesus. Here is perhaps the simplest way to resolve the tension between being pacifists yet appreciating the work police do: Say that just as parents need to be more directive and controlling with young children, so also the magistrate's sword described in Romans 13 is needed at times. But point out that when parents continue that control too long, it becomes destructive and dysfunctional.

We as followers of Jesus should join him as the vanguard of those willing to risk laying down control, calling people to both receive God's grace and show it and moving toward the new way of relating (voluntary partnerships rather than forcing others to do "good" things). Grimsrud uses too broad a brush when he portrays the Anabaptists as making the choices they did because they were "seeking an impact on their entire culture" and when he describes our government as having a "policy of empire and world domination." But I know it's easy to speak too broadly when making a point—perhaps I did so in my parent-child analogy.—*Harold N. Miller, Corning, N.Y.*

Votes do not authorize decisions

Gilberto Flores presents a thoughtful and important statement about elections (Grace and Truth, Oct. 5), but unfortunately the message is marred by an erroneous inference. He suggests that by voting we authorize the decisions made by those for whom we vote and therefore are responsible for their decisions. This view is common, but there is nothing in the U.S. constitutional system or in any well-established ethical code to support such a position. The ballot is simply a vote, not a vow of loyalty. Casting a vote is nothing more than declaring a choice. There is no obligation to either candidate or party.

I'm grateful we are living in a political structure that allows us to question, criticize and disagree with an elected official at any time. As a citizen, I expect to do that after voting for Senator Kerry. And as a Christian I pledge to pray for him if he is elected.—*J.R. Burkholder, Goshen, Ind.*

Bush or Kerry won't lead the church

I found the articles in the Oct. 5 issue an informative and helpful analysis of how the two presidential candidates might lead the nation relative to three issues. But two things puzzled me.

The first was the wording of the title, "Where Bush or Kerry May Lead Us." Who is the "us"? Titles like, "Where Bush or Kerry Might Lead the Nation" or, "How Bush or Kerry Might Impact Three Areas of Public Policy" would have provided better orientation to your readers' perspectives. While I need to come to terms with my identity as a citizen of the United States, I also need to reconcile that identity with a higher allegiance: my citizenship in the kingdom of God. Is the "us" in your title intended to mean all people in the United States or those of us in the kingdom of God? Bush or Kerry may lead the nation, but a two-kingdom understanding suggests that presidents may not lead "us" anywhere. This blending of identity may indicate a church that is not as in touch with its historic identity as a martyr and migrating people as it could be.

This higher allegiance leads me to the second thing that puzzled me in this collection of articles.

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue, dated Nov. 2, falls on Election Day in the United States. The national event has engaged many of our readers, and several election-related items are included in this issue: results of a postcard survey of preferences for president (page 19), some conjecture about political trends among members of Mennonite Church USA (page 32), results from the most-ever votes on our Web site (page 5) and Readers Say letters on these pages and on page 24.

In the midst of such national decision-making we also focus on the discernment each of us faces individually as well as a major decision before the church. Eddy Hall and Gary Morsch (page 8) offer steps for listening to both God's inner and outer calls. On page 30, we introduce a new column entitled "ACHE" (Anabaptist Center for Healthcare Ethics). This monthly column will be written by a variety of authors and is intended to serve Mennonite Church USA until next July, when Charlotte 2005 delegates will be asked to vote on a resolution about health-care access in the United States.—*Editors*

The Mennonite asks us to evaluate presidential candidates based on issues most important to cultural self-interest rather than the public policy issues that seem to matter most to God. In the Scriptures the public policies that God seems doggedly concerned about are care for the widow, the orphan and the alien, nonexploitative business practices, fair housing and the needs of the poor. Where would Bush or Kerry lead "us" in these areas?—*David Boshart, Parnell, Iowa*

Vote for third-party candidate

The three views on "Where Bush or Kerry May Lead Us" (Oct. 5) tried so hard to be neutral that they did not provide much useful information. King and Horning note that "the President's policies are important in determining how income is distributed" but did not report on how income distribution changed during the Bush administration. Has the total tax burden (local, state and federal, including FICA) become more progressive or regressive? How much has it shifted? Are any of Kerry's proposals likely to change the distribution of taxes or income? As Christians, I think it is important that we vote for economic justice.

Another important issue is sanctity of life. Neither candidate has a consistent pro-life platform, but some Christians support Bush because he says he is opposed to abortion. No mention was made of Bush's actual record. According to *Sojourners*, the abortion rate has increased during Bush's term. In that case, it makes no sense to vote for Bush because of his stand on abortion.

Many Christians think they should vote for a Christian. Do either Kerry or Bush meet the James 2:14-17 and 1 John 3:17 test? Both are millionaires. They raised millions of dollars for politics. They should have a record of giving to causes that feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the sick.

If there is so little difference between Kerry and Bush and neither is a Christian or likely to support Christian principles, it would be better to support a third-party candidate. There are many; some are more Christian and more pro-life. A brief review of them by *The Mennonite* would be in order. After all, we are called to be faithful, not successful. So we shouldn't be worried about "wasting our vote on a candidate who has no chance of winning."—*Wendell Miller, Engadine, Mich.*

Abortion is election issue

"Where Bush or Kerry May Lead Us" (Oct. 5) was well-written and interesting. However, I think "life issues" should have been covered as well. The importance of issues such as abortion, euthanasia and capital punishment outweigh or are equal to any of the issues you covered.

Since 1973, 44 million unborn children have been killed by American abortionists; that is far more than the number of people killed by American soldiers in the same period of time. And the abortionists' victims were innocent. Abortion is the greatest injustice taking place in America today. With the aging of our population, the temptation to "euthanize" the weakest members of our society to save money will grow. The government and insurance companies will continue to create systems that make euthanasia easier.—*Jon Kauffman, Baudette, Minn.*

Until recently it was legal in the United States for a doctor to pull the body of a full-term, viable baby from a mother's womb by its feet, suction out its brain and then deliver a dead baby. George Bush signed the Ban on Partial Birth Abortion that John Kerry did not support. If you have the opportunity to hold a newborn baby, do so and ask yourself how a "peace candidate" could allow the slaughter of thousands of innocent children. No other issue need be considered.—*Stan Miller, Wooster, Ohio*

I believe *The Mennonite* made a major error by only presenting the three projections for the United States. The morality of abortion, the marriage amendment act and embryonic stem cell research outweigh the other three discussed. Kerry has taken an anti-biblical stand on all three that will have far greater implications for our country. I would like to know your reasoning for not including such important issues relating to us as Christians and to this election.—*Marlin Zook, Dalton, Ohio*

Editor's note: we selected three broad issues that we believed would be of the greatest interest to the greatest number of our readers: relations to other countries, the economy and the environment.

Prayers most effective ballots

Jim Montgomery, interim president of Dawn Ministries, reports that the Christian church in India engaged in a massive prayer effort for their recent elections. He said, "The underdog party, also the one most concerned about religious freedom, won the election with a landslide victory. This was contrary to the opinion polls." Freedoms, according to Montgomery, have benefited.

Now they are concentrating their prayers on the U.S. election—not for any one candidate but that the kingdom of God may be enhanced.

Many of us are concerned about our future leadership. I believe concerted prayer on the part of Christians could be our most effective vote, whether or not we cast a ballot.—*Eugene K. Souder, Grottoes, Va.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

I plan to vote for:

- ○ George Bush (29%)
- ○ John Kerry (59%)
- ○ Ralph Nader (2%)
- ○ Not sure or undecided (2%)
- ○ Never/seldom vote (2%)
- ○ Usually vote but won't this time (7%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Readers Say *continued on page 24*

IN BRIEF

Bluffton receives $1.5 million gift

In 1936, Bluffton (then College) students Mary Nord and Joseph Ignat shared a love of theater. Mary and Joseph later married and raised a family together. Now the Nord and Ignat families will establish the Mary Nord Ignat and Joseph Ignat Endowed Chair in Theatre. The establishment of an endowed chair at Bluffton University requires an endowment gift of $1.5 million. This is the first fully-funded endowed chair for Bluffton.—*Bluffton University News Service*

Commission calls Episcopal Church to apologize

An Anglican Church commission rebuked the Episcopal Church USA on Oct. 18 for ordaining an openly gay bishop in New Hampshire and for blessing same-sex unions, and called for a moratorium on both practices "until some new consensus in the Anglican Communion emerges." In a report issued in London, the commission asked the Episcopal Church to apologize for causing pain and division in the global Anglican Communion, the second-largest church body in the world, with 77 million members in 164 countries.—*New York Times*

North Central sets plans to study affiliation

The North Central Conference executive committee met Oct. 16 to plan a timetable for deciding on NCC's affiliation with Mennonite Church USA.

The committee decided to draft documents for congregational review, to be checked by the committee at its January 2005 meeting and by pastors at their pastor-spouse retreat the following month. These will then be distributed to all NCC congregations for their review or study. NCC leadership will be available to meet with and assist congregations if they wish.

The vote at NCC's June 2005 meeting will first be a poll of whether each congregation is ready to make a decision. The results of that vote will determine further step(s).—*Galen Kauffman*

EMU gives Swartley, Keeler alumni awards

HARRISONBURG, Va.—The Alumni Association of Eastern Mennonite University has honored two of its graduates for their work in reflecting the school's vision, mission and values.

Willard Swartley

Richard Keeler

Willard M. Swartley, a 1959 EMU graduate living in Elkhart, Ind., received EMU's 2004 "alumnus of the year" award Oct. 10. The award is given annually to a graduate who has been recognized for significant recent achievements in their profession, community or church.

Dr. Richard F. Keeler, a 1960 EMU graduate who served many years as a public health physician in the eastern Caribbean, received the "distinguished service" award. This annual award recognizes graduates who have demonstrated in notable ways the university's Christian service and peacemaking emphases.

Swartley, a member of the Bible and religion faculty at EMU, 1965-68 and 1971-78, served most recently as dean and professor of New Testament at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart. He was cited for his leadership roles as a pastor, teacher, writer and Bible scholar, "combining courageous academic inquiry with Christian devotion, patient observation with imaginative application and sober discipline with joyful freedom."

Dr. Keeler spent some 13 years on the islands of Trinidad and Tobago, serving under the auspices of Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions. Using edu-

Making dough at Bethel's Fall Fest

Sara Miller, a sophomore from Mount Hope, Kan., participates i Anything Goes, an annual "athletic" event that takes place duri Fall Fest at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. This event uses tarp covered with flour, and participants must run under a spri kler and then roll in the flour to try to make as much "dough" a possible. When time is called, spectators vote by cheering for t team they think made the most dough.—*Bethel College News Service*

Getting a kick out of camp

Grace Mennonite Church, Pandora, Ohio, hosted a soccer cam Aug. 2-6 for local children Kindergarten to sixth grade. The pu pose of this camp was to encourage skill development of you soccer players in an affirming environment and to model Go love through service. Any money raised above the cost of the camp will be used to support various mission projects of Gra About 80 children participated in this camp.—*Dave Maurer* cation as a primary tool, he developed a broad public health strategy to combat leprosy ("Hansen's disease") on the islands. His success in curing patients led to invitations to advise similar programs on the islands of Guyana, St. Lucia, Jamaica and other eastern Caribbean islands.—*EMU News Service*

Numbers show churches are turning inward

CHAMPAIGN, Ill.—According to a new book by empty tomb, inc., U.S. churches are turning inward and spending more on themselves.

The State of Church Giving Through 2002, released Oct. 15, reports that as a portion of after-tax income, church members were at a 35-year low in supporting activities beyond their congregations, from 0.66 percent of per capita income in 1968 to 0.38 percent in 2002, a decline of 41 percent.

Per-member giving as a portion of income to total contributions was 3.11 percent in 1968 and 2.62 percent in 2002, an overall decline of 16 percent.

The 14th in the annual series analyzes data for almost one-third of the estimated 350,000 religious congregations of any type in the United States. Only Protestant congregations regularly published data between 1968 and 2002, the main focus of the study.—*empty tomb, inc.*

Pennsylvania Relief Sale nets $525,000

LANCASTER, Pa.—Pennsylvania Relief Sale treasurer Carl Litwiller reports that he sent $525,000 to Mennonite Central Committee in the fiscal year ending June 30.

This total included proceeds from the annual relief sale, heifer and slaughter sale and the Cumberland Valley House Against Hunger.

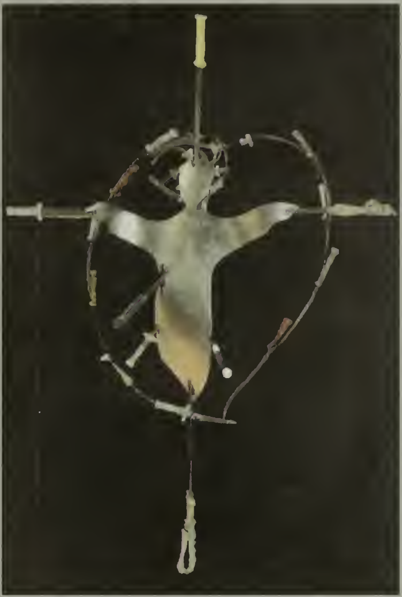
The 49th Pennsylvania Relief Sale will be held April 1-2, 2005, in Harrisburg.—*Pennsylvania Relief Sale*

Neighborhood cookbook builds up community

ALMERE, Netherlands—A diverse urban neighborhood is discovering that the simple delight of a shared table is more than a satisfied palate. As customs and beloved recipes are savored, boundaries slip away, creating friends out of people that once considered each other strangers.

A community celebration Oct. 3 introduced a cookbook to the neighborhood of Stedenwijk in Almere. Inside *De Smaak van Stedenwijk* (*The Taste of Stedenwijk*) are recipes from a broad range of ethnic backgrounds, including Armenian, Moroccan, Surinamese, Indonesian, Iraqi, Iranian, Kurdish, South African, North American and Dutch. Paired with each recipe is a photograph and short story about its contributor; each contributor lives or works in the neighborhood called Stedenwijk.

Jackie Wyse, who serves in Almere with Mennonite Mission Network and the Dutch Mennonite Mission, Peace and Aid Committees, calls the cookbook "a foundation upon which the Inloophuis, the churches of Stedenwijk, and the neighborhood itself can build in the future." —*Mennonite Mission Network*



Courtesy photo

Beat daggers and knives into art

Hermann Guggiari, an internationally known sculptor, created this piece, which he calls "Metamorphosis," from daggers and knives given to Jonathan Beachy by prisoners he visits in Asunción, Paraguay. Beachy, one of the pastors in the "Libertad" (Freedom) Mennonite Church, has 450 men under his care in the prison.—*Jonathan Beachy*

Two decades of service in mental health

El'dad Ranch, near Steinbach, Man., recently celebrated its 20th year of caring for people living with mental disabilities. El'dad in Hebrew means "God has loved." El'dad Ranch has three residential programs that can house up to 10 men. Two of these provide alternatives to incarceration for men with mental disabilities. For more information, see www.mcc.org/manitoba/programs/eldad.html. —*MCC News Service*

IN BRIEF

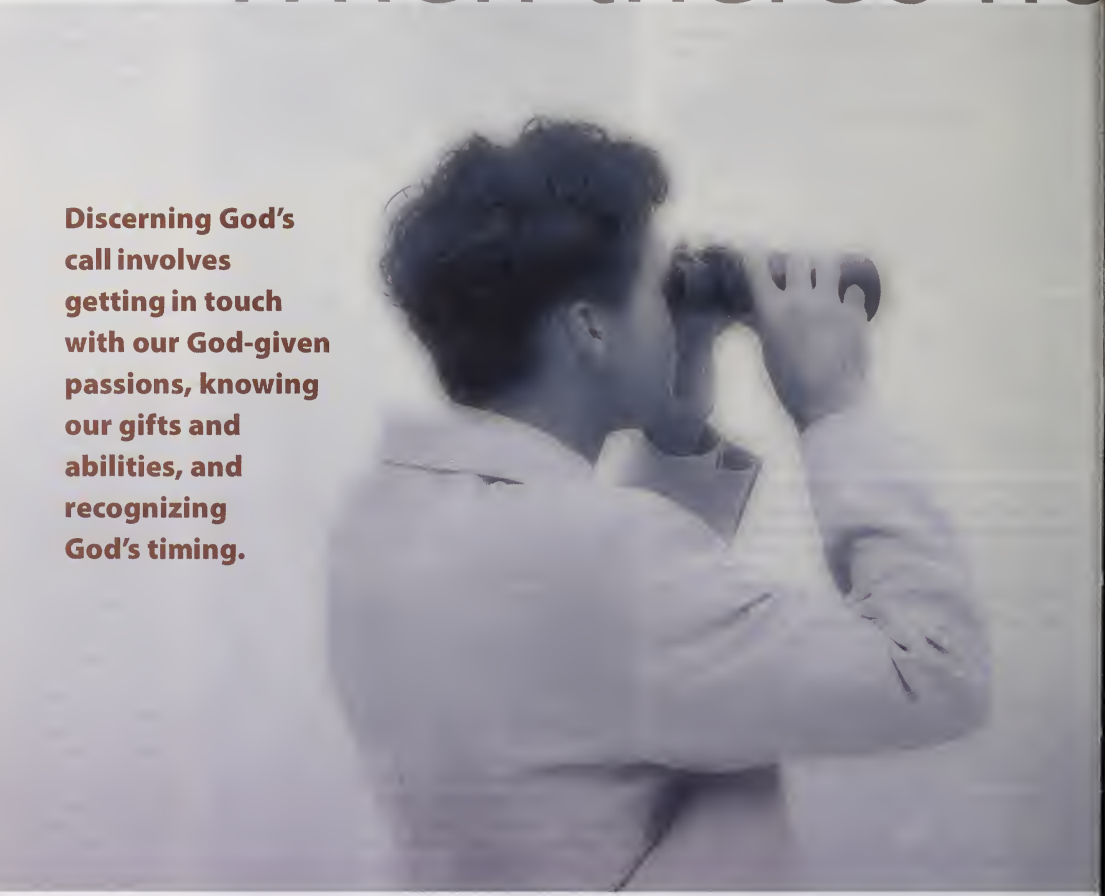
Stats to ponder

Number of new secrets the Oval Office classified last year: 14 million. Approximate percent of these secrets, according to the National Security Archive, whose classification was "dubious in the extreme" (including Augusto Pinochet's favorite liquor beverages, Scotch and Pisco Sours): 90 percent. Number of board feet of lumber buried each year in U.S. cemeteries: 30 million. Number of 2,000-square-foot homes this would construct: 15,000. Age at which U.S. children begin asking for brand-name products: 3.—*Yes!*

White families' wealth advantage has grown

The enormous wealth gap between white families and black and Hispanic families grew larger after the most recent recession, a private analysis of government data has found. White households had a median net worth of greater than $88,000 in 2002, 11 times that of Hispanic households and more than 14 times that of black households, the Pew Hispanic Center said in a study released Oct. 18. Blacks were slowest to emerge from the economic downturn that started in 2000 and ended early in 2001, the report found.—*New York Times*

When there's no



Discerning God's call involves getting in touch with our God-given passions, knowing our gifts and abilities, and recognizing God's timing.

Following your passions to discover God's call

by Eddy Hall and Gary Morsch

burning bush

He was watching sheep in the desert when a burning bush caught his eye and a voice spoke from the bush: "Take your shoes off, you are on holy ground." Moses took off his shoes, and God told him, "I am sending you to free your people from their slavery in Egypt."

On the road to Damascus a blinding light knocked Saul to the ground and a voice from heaven demanded, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" The voice went on to say, "I am sending you to [the Gentiles] to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light" (Acts 26:14, 17-18, NIV).

You may have heard pastors or missionaries tell dramatic stories of their calls to ministry. These are wonderful, faith-building stories. But for every person who experiences one of these dramatic calls, God calls dozens of people to ministry without fireworks or fanfare. Some Christians fail to recognize God's call because they are waiting for the equivalent of a burning bush or a voice from heaven. They have yet to hear God's call to ministry, not because God isn't calling but because they don't know what to listen for.

Discerning God's call involves getting in touch with our God-given passions, knowing our gifts and abilities, and recognizing God's timing.

Clue #1: Passion

Do you have a deep burning desire to do something specific for God? Maybe you never dared to dream that it might really happen. But it could be that your longtime dream is in fact God-given.

Two questions can help identify your God-given passion. First, What is it that breaks the heart of God that also breaks your heart? Is it the pain of homelessness? Of latchkey children? Of racism? Are you burdened by the woundedness of adults who were abused as children? Is your heart broken by unhealthy marriages? Where in your world is the pain you most long to heal?

Continued on page 10

Your passion tells you which ministry team to join; your gifts and other abilities tell you what position to play on that team.

Continued from page 9

Second, What kind of personal ministry would you love to do, along with others, to touch this pain with God's love? Do you dream of a city in which all the homeless people have decent shelter and food? If so, what part would you love to play, along with a group of others, to make this dream a reality? Do you long for people with troubled marriages to be able to find practical help in healing their relationships? If so, what personal role in fulfilling that dream would bring you great joy?

In *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC*, Frederick Buechner writes, "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

Clue #2: Abilities

While your passion points you to the ministry to which God is calling you, your spiritual gifts and other abilities define your role in that ministry. Take, for example, a Habitat for Humanity ministry team. If you are called to be a member of this team, you will know it because you will have a passion to respond to the needs of people who need better housing. But that passion doesn't tell you whether your primary role on the Habitat team is to pound nails or recruit volunteers. That is determined by the abilities you bring to the ministry—your spiritual gifts, skills, training, personality and experience.

Your passion tells you which ministry team to join; your gifts and other abilities tell you what position to play on that team.

Clue #3: Timing

God called Abraham to be the father of a great nation. Abraham waited and waited until it was too late for Sarah to have children. So, to carry out God's call, he did the obvious thing—he fathered a child through Hagar. Humanly it made all the sense in the world. But it was not God's way or God's timing.

God's timing often baffles us. Although it looked to Abraham, and often looks to us, as if God is late, he never is. God told the prophet Habakkuk: "These things I plan won't happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed" (2:3, NLT).

God once gave me (Eddy) a powerful call to work in the inner city. For several years, I was a lot like Abraham—I tried everything I could think of to try to make God's vision a reality. But nothing happened. Finally, after about four years, I caught on that I needed to leave the timing to God. Then I was able to relax and wait for God's timing.

Finally, nine years after that dream had been planted in my heart, the ministry was born when two other families moved across the country to join us to live and work in the inner city. My understanding of the call was right. But I had to wait on God's timing.

Expand your options.

One of the most common barriers to recognizing God's call is tunnel vision—considering only a narrow range of ministry options. Some churches make a list of all their programs and ask members to match their gifts to one of these ministries. These lists can be useful, but when working in church programs is the only option considered, many people end up in ministries that don't match their call—or even on the sidelines. Here are several options to explore as you consider God's call. Your likelihood of discovering your call is far greater when you explore the full range of options.

1. Recognize that you already have a ministry.

John had served faithfully in his church for many years. He had ushered and sung in the choir, among other things, but nothing really clicked. Then he attended a workshop at his church on discovering call. When he learned that a so-called secular job can in fact be a ministry, he realized that for years he had already been living out his calling—he just hadn't known it. John loved working as a salesman at a used-car dealership, mainly because it gave him the opportunity to work with the younger guys on the sales staff, to mentor them, to be almost a father figure to some of them. "Working with those guys is my ministry," he beamed. "I'm already doing my ministry and just didn't know it." Sometimes finding your call is as simple as recognizing that God already has you where he wants you.

2. Join an existing ministry.

As many as half of all church members will find a good match for their calls in an existing church program. The problem comes when we assume that most or all Christians should work in these programs.

When we start, not with program needs but with

In most healthy churches, one or more new ministries is born every year. (Just as important: One or more old ministry programs is retired every year.)

looking for call, we find that many—perhaps even most—Christians are not being called to work in existing church programs. Sometimes finding the right match is as simple as broadening the "ministry opportunity" list to include ministry opportunities in the community. Look around and ask, Where is God already at work in this community, and how can I join God in that work?

3. Redesign a ministry around your call.

Kristin, who directed the children's Sunday school for her church, was discouraged. The classes were tiny, the teachers demoralized. One day someone asked Kristin, "If you could do anything you wanted to do with children's ministry, what would that look like?"

Immediately her face lit up. "I'd like to go to a children's church format. We'd have all 20 of the kids from grades one through six together. We have a couple of high school girls who would be great helpers."

The church council approved Kristin's plan, and excitement returned to the children's ministry. The problem had never been Kristin's call. She just needed to be empowered to reshape the ministry around the vision God had given her.

4. Start a new ministry.

Every church needs a clearly defined process for empowering members to give birth to their dreams for new ministry and a way to nurture those newborn ministries. In most healthy churches, one or more new ministries is born every year. (Just as important: One or more old ministry programs is retired every year.)

5. Take time for the call inward.

To sustain ministry, we must strike a healthy balance between action and reflection, between the journey inward and the journey outward. Usually the inward and outward journeys are a normal part of the rhythms of daily and weekly life. But there are also times when God calls us away from most active ministry for focused inner work.

We may need to take time, for example, to grieve, overcome an addiction or recover from the effects of abuse. Healing is hard work and in its most intense stages demands most of our energy. During those times we need to focus on our healing work without feeling guilty that we have little or no energy for outward mission.

God may also call us away from ministry for times of renewal. And, like Paul, who spent three years in Arabia before beginning his public ministry (Galatians 1:17-18), there may be times when our primary focus is not on current ministry but on preparing for future ministry. When God calls us inward, we need to obey that call. Once the intense inner work is done, outward ministry will follow.

No, God's call is not just for the rare few who see burning bushes or blinding lights from heaven. God's call comes to every one of us.

Listen carefully and you will hear it.

Adapted with permission from When There's No Burning Bush: Following Your Passions to Discover God's Call *by Gary Morsch and Eddy Hall (Baker Books, 2004). Gary Morsch of Olathe, Kan., is a physician who founded and is president of Heart to Heart International (www.hearttoheart.org), a global humanitarian organization that inspires and mobilizes individuals to serve the needs of the poor. Eddy Hall of Goessel, Kan., is a senior consultant with Living Stones Associates (www.livingstones.com, a consulting team that equips churches for healthy growth.*

Two recent books look at vocation. In **When There's No Burning Bush: Following Your Passions to Discover God's Call** (Baker Books, 2004, $12.99) by Eddy Hall and Gary Morsch (from which the above article is excerpted), the overarching concept is ministry. The bulk of the book discusses six "myths": Ministry is just for "ministers," most real ministry happens in church, an ordinary job gets in the way of ministry, good Christians never say no, it's best to play it safe and there has to be a burning bush to know God is calling. The many illustrative stories make this an accessible and interesting book, and the authors include an extensive study/action guide and an appendix with resources for congregational leaders. Their approach is utilitarian, and action far outweighs contemplation. Many will find this a practical, helpful guide to doing ministry.

When There's No Burning Bush
Gary Hall
Gary Morsch

Vocation: Discerning Our Callings in Life by Douglas J. Schuurman (Eerdmans, 2004, $20) aims to develop "a contemporary articulation of the Protestant doctrine of vocation." Schuurman sees as a central task of pastoral ministry "reminding Christians that God calls them into their homes, neighborhoods, workplaces, and civic and political communities to serve God and neighbor." This more academic approach explores the concept of vocation in dialogue with the Bible and Reformers Luther and Calvin, as well as contemporary theologians. The topic is well-worth exploring.—*Gordon Houser*

From Manchester

A look at the wobble of British Anabaptism

by Philip Wood

I'm told that planet hunters—those superheros of the astronomical community—can't yet look at a planet directly. There's too much glare and interference. A planet's presence is only betrayed through the wobble in a nearby star. I sometimes think British Anabaptism is a bit like that. Would we ever know about the legacy of the 16th-century radicals if it weren't for the wobble in Britain's continuing Christian traditions and political life? Today there are no Amish in Axminster or Mennonites in Matlock. There is a gap in the British ecclesiastical spectrum where Anabaptism might have been.

There were Anabaptists in England in the 16th century, many of them Flemish refugees. Anabaptists settled in England's eastern counties—in Hull, Norwich, Ely, London and Colchester. Here, too, they met with persecution, and we hear of executions in Colchester and at Smithfield in London. For many reasons Anabaptism did not survive the 16th century in Britain as a continuing tradition. Instead Anabaptist became a general term of abuse for all manner of heresy and nonconformity. The Anabaptist influence in the following century went underground and may be detected in a range of radical religious and political expression, from the Diggers to the Levellers, the Baptists, the Puritan Left and the Society of Friends. But the links are obscure, and we may have to accept that the lives of many ordinary early Anabaptists in England will remain obscure.

> **As much as anything, the** aesthetics of Anabaptism **appealed to us—that** whiff of colonial fresh air **and the appreciation of** beauty in simplicity.

oMennonites

Tea in Highgate: How then does a Bury lad like me end up as a "pestilential Anabaptist"? From 1982 to 1985 I was a student at London Bible College. Those three years stick in my mind, since that is also where I met Karen, my wife. Unknown to us, Alan Kreider, then director of the London Mennonite Centre, had lectured at LBC years earlier and was invited back for a debate with a spokesman from L'Abri on unilateral nuclear disarmament. We learned later that after 20 years in Britain, Alan and Eleanor Kreider's address book read like a directory of British Anabaptism. After the debate, the students voted, resulting in Pacifists five, Just Warriors nil.

By this time both of us were uneasy with the diet of individualistic pietism served up in much of mainstream Evangelicalism. It seemed to us that many churches served as gathering places for individuals who related to religious activities as spectators rather than participants. Often we had experienced local congregations more as crowds than communities. We also had a sense that the Evangelical social conscience was selective, failing to engage with issues of poverty and wealth, war and peace. As much as anything, the aesthetics of Anabaptism appealed to us—that whiff of colonial fresh air and the appreciation of beauty in simplicity.

My first memory of spending time with Alan and Eleanor was an afternoon visit to the Mennonite Centre in Highgate, not so far from the tube station or Highgate Cemetery, where Karl Marx is buried. Perhaps it wasn't the most auspicious start of a friendship. We began with a cultural misunderstanding. Having been invited to tea, we ate the lightest of lunches, only to discover that tea meant the beverage and not the meal. Over the years we spent much time at the Centre, which more than made up for this initial misunderstanding. The welcoming kitchen of the London Mennonite Centre remains one of my favorite places on Earth. We talked for hours with Alan under the trees in the garden about simple lifestyle, living in community and Anabaptism. Karen and I didn't know it then, but that visit was the beginning of an Anabaptist journey.

Hypothetically speaking: Life continued in this vein for four years after we left college. We had an unhappy time with a missionary society, which only served to highlight the gulf between our increasingly radical views and the conservative Evangelical tradition we knew. During this period, two things made a huge impression on us. One was our work with homeless people, first as volunteers at a hostel in Bury and then as assistant wardens of the same residential home. Since then, most of my professional life has been spent in Christian housing organizations and at the interface of church and community. The second was a letter we wrote to Alan Kreider in 1988 along the lines of, "If a person hypothetically wished to become a Mennonite, hypothetically of course, how would they do it?"

Becoming a Mennonite in Britain **is far from simple.**

Becoming a Mennonite in Britain is far from simple. Property prices in London are much higher than in other parts of Britain, especially in the north of England. Since the only Mennonite congregation in Britain was at Wood Green in London, and we lived in the Manchester area, it never was an option for us simply to join a Mennonite church.

Alan put us in touch with Rick and Maggie Coldman, formerly involved with the Wood Green congregation but then providing the nucleus for a small Anabaptist community in Doncaster (South Yorkshire) with two other families. Hexthorpe was a conservative, working-class area of Doncaster and hardly seemed promising Anabaptist territory, but we gave up our jobs and moved to join Rick, Maggie and the others late in 1989. The night we trundled over the M62 between Lancashire and

Continued on page 14

Continued from page 13

Yorkshire in the December snow, we broke down in Rick's van at a cold service station.

There were frustrations and highlights over the next two years. In the end, we failed to overcome the practical obstacles to turning our experiment into a viable, continuing community. Finding suitable employment proved elusive, and Karen and I moved to Leeds in 2001, where I found work with Nightstop, a project offering emergency accommodation to young, homeless people in the homes of volunteer hosts. We learned much from Rick and Maggie and the others over those years. I can hardly recall an experience with as much pleasure as rolling up to the Maude Foster mill (the largest working windmill in Britain) at Boston and Lincolnshire at 4 a.m. to enjoy a scrumptious breakfast and the hospitality of James the miller.

Our first daughter, Rebecca, was born in Doncaster. I remember being ushered into Rick and Maggie's state-of-the-art delivery suite, sitting at the bedside and being given a tuna sandwich when Karen was in labor. This surreal scene became even more bizarre when the midwife—a Scottish Presbyterian—insisted on making Karen spell Mennonite between contractions. However brief our time there, whenever I think of community, I find myself in Rick and Maggie's kitchen.

> **British Anabaptism has a** Diaspora existence. **We encounter the living God not only in** community **but as** exiles and strangers.

London
Mennonite
Centre
14 Shepherds Hill

Tea in Highgate: The London Mennonite Centre

Mennonite Mission Network photo

What's Welsh for community? We both wanted this tale to have a happy ending, but so far it hasn't worked out that way. Some years later, we tried again to make a life together in community. By then Rick and Maggie had a small holding on a windy Welsh hillside near Carmarthen, and we were joined by Chris and Rebecca, friends we had come to know in Leeds. Perhaps it was the isolation or the living conditions, but for Karen this was a move too far. She plunged into a depression and a crisis of faith that since then has left her outside the Christian church. The financial aftermath of the move almost ruined us. Karen and I did not agree about Wales. She wished we had never gone, and I wished we had never left. I am left with a profound sense of loss, for community and friendship and the possibilities that seemed so real but now seem closed to us.

Recent events, though, bring renewed hope. Earlier this year we moved from Bury to Jersey, where I took up a post as Warden of Communicare, a church-related community center. For Karen the move has brought a return to faith. Jersey brings fresh challenges. As I write, a Jersey Anabaptist study group is about to be launched.

This is the reality of Anabaptist experience in Britain—yesterday and today. British Anabaptism has a Diaspora existence. We encounter the living God not only in community but as exiles and strangers. Outside London and the Hutterites in Robertsbridge and Canterbury, there are no focal points for Anabaptist life except for the Anabaptist Network and in some areas Anabaptist study groups. If the church in general feels the chill with declining membership and an increasingly alien host culture, then Anabaptism in particular finds the experience of life on the margins even more acute. But perhaps that is a vocation as well as a curse? I can't say where this Anabaptist journey will take us, only that we're still traveling. TM

Philip Wood is seeking to begin an Anabaptist study group in Jersey, an island in the English Channel.

Creed

by Jean Janzen

Great-grandfather bought land
from the railroad and broke
the virgin curve, corn rising
higher than his head.

Even then he was restless
for the white nights of Russia,
his eldest daughters who stayed,
and for the church of his childhood.

He returned three times, his white
beard flowing like the wake
of the plowing ship, as he sang
"Our God, our faith, our baptism,"

his body finally laid to rest
in the old country,
my great-grandmother's in the new,
in a little fenced plot

which my cousins got tired of tending.
Now they point and say,
"There, under the soybeans,
somewhere in the first rise of land."

In the Ukraine our tour bus
through small Gnadenheim,
nothing but wheat and sunflowers,
the gravestone markers removed

and laid into the floor
of a villager whose grandfather
bowed to the Czar.
In the kitchen corner, a smoky

icon of Jesus, which the Babushka
takes down and kisses, her lips
marking for all of us
what is lost and found.

Jean Janzen is a Mennonite poet whose most recent book is Piano in the Vineyard *(Good Books, 2004).*

Communities
Pursuing
Christ's
Purpose
THIRD IN A SERIES
STEWARDSHIP

A missional way of life

God calls a young family to move off the farm to the inner city.

by Laurie L. Oswald

Friends and family marveled that Doug and Jen Lehman moved off their three-acre farm, took their small son from security to uncertainty and sacrificed living on three acres of land for living in a former drug house.

> We've stepped out of the status quo of our circle, with many of our friends buying homes in more middle-class neighborhoods.
> —Jen Lehman

But their move wasn't all that dramatic, the couple humbly admits. They simply answered God's call to live among people in the multiethnic and lower-income neighborhood in Chambersburg, Pa., next door to Cedar Street Mennonite Church.

But for all its simplicity, their reasoning sounded risky. The Lehmans moved in 2001, after being married 5½ years and raising their first child, Shiloh, who was 18 months old when they moved into town. He now has a baby brother, Elijah.

The couple sold the three acres near the dairy farm of Doug's folks—Harry and Kathy Lehman—with whom Doug still farms. In doing so, the young couple hoped to bridge the gap between serenity of the farm for the more on-the-edge inner city. They wanted to explore beyond their familiar cocoon and test whether the oft-illusive word "missional" could indeed become a way of life, they say.

"As much as we had a passion to come into the city and saw clearly that God wanted us here, it was still a struggle to move off the farm," Jen says. "If it weren't for the sense that God really had his hand in this, we might have pulled and fought more.

"We didn't want to hurt our families in making this move, and we were thankful for their blessing. But we've had to explain why we did this.... Some people questioned our bringing a toddler here.... And we've stepped out of the status quo of our circle, with many of our friends buying homes in more middle-class neighborhoods."

Doug says: "Many Mennonite congregations are Anglo, and their families have gone to the same congregation for generations. Jen and I loved relating to people in this neighborhood through friendship evangelism and wanted to find out what it would be like to live among them as neighbors.

"The word 'missional' can be an empty buzzword. We as Mennonites are good at talking about what it means and hearing sermons about it. And we are told we are a people of peace, a missional people. But in the end, Jen and I needed to risk being it to make it real."

Listen and love: Jen and Doug Lehman

Houses and homes, strangers and friends: Cedar Street embraced the young couple's risk and redeemed a drug house slated for demolition by investing $10,000 to make it a duplex. The Lehmans moved into one side. Another young couple—Eric and Valerie Roth—live in the other.

Doug and Jen say they weren't seeking just to turn a house into a home but also to turn strangers into friends. In this move they've learned not to push relationships too hard, to do hip-hop in youth group and hang out in backyard picnics. They've felt the sadness of watching fathers go to prison, families disintegrate, youth take drugs. But they've also felt the joy of watching walls of defense drop as friendships take root in the hundred tiny interactions that create community.

They listen and love, offering the most visible face of Jesus—themselves. The most formal ministry they do is a Bible study for about 10 neighborhood youth once a week. Otherwise they simply rub shoulders and hearts with neighbors, one person at a time.

"I struggled with building a relationship with my neighbor lady next door," Jen says. "I wasn't sure how much to share with her about Jesus....But it finally dawned on me that what it means to share

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AMBS window

Fall 2004
Volume 15 Issue 1

② **Thinking Mission**

③ **"Turnaround Churches" tour gives hope**

④ **President's Window**

Panorama

Mission *and* peace

Mission. Peace. Usually these emphases of the Christian faith are thought of as separate and distinctly different. There's a tendency to focus on one or the other: mission or peace, seldom mission and peace.

"We have to be people who bless the **and**," Alan Kreider, associate professor of church history and mission, says. "When the New Testament talks about the good news, it is often talking about the gospel of peace. The gospel of Christ and the gospel of peace are the same."

At AMBS, the course, "Mission and Peace: The Church's Ministry in the World," has been challenging students to integrate these two emphases for nearly 20 years. The course, one of only two required for all students who graduate from AMBS, has been taught by Art McPhee, associate professor of mission and intercultural studies, both as an on-campus and an online course. Alan, who has recently joined the AMBS faculty after many years with Mennonite Mission Network, will begin teaching it in the spring semester.

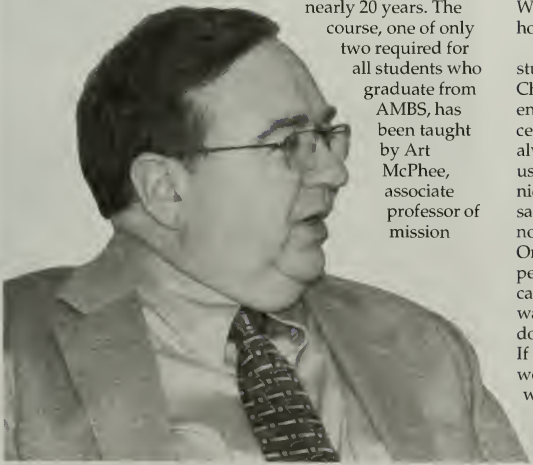
"One thing we know is that God is on a mission and part of that mission is to bring peace," Art says, explaining why the course is so central to the seminary's curriculum.

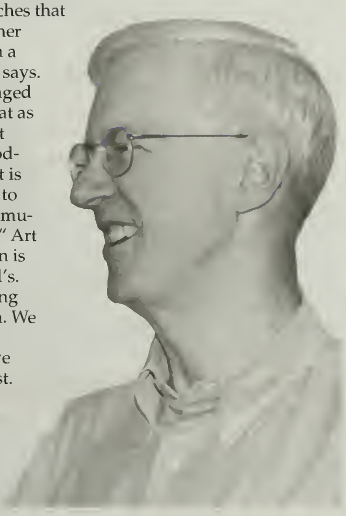
The course is designed with three emphases: what the Bible says about mission and peace, how the church has looked at mission and peace, and how this is applied in the church today. "I have students look at examples of churches that try to bring together Word and deed in a holistic way," Art says.

Art has challenged students to see that as Christians it is not enough to live God-centered lives. "It is always necessary to use words to communicate the gospel," Art says. "The mission is not ours, it is God's. Only God can bring peace and shalom. We can do it in small ways, but what we do points to Christ. If we don't use words, then what we do points to ourselves."

"We have to be midwives for shalom," Alan adds, and then acknowledges that this will create conflict. "We have to know how to be Christ-like in conflict. We especially have to know how to be peacemakers in a time of constant war."

"I don't want students to graduate from AMBS and think, 'Now what is my ministry?'" Art says. "I want them to see that God is at work so they begin to ask, 'How am I going to join up with God's mission?' Pastors have to be more than chaplains. They have to help their congregations think about how to become part of God's mission of bringing Christ's peace in the world." ●





Mary E. Klassen

Thinking mission today

Walter Sawatsky, Ph.D., professor of church history and mission and director of the Mission Studies Center at AMBS

The current motto of the Mennonite Church in USA and Canada is "missional church," common also in other North American denominations. Some years earlier the in phrase was "church in mission" or "mission in six continents."

There are two key phrases, both in Latin, that have come to represent the essential concern in mission, that help us see what "missional church" must mean. They are *missio Dei* (God's Mission) and *missio ecclesiae* (the mission of the church). Our persistent challenge is to subordinate the church's mission to God's mission—to keep the relationship with God as primary.

Even more problematic in North America is the tendency to separate church and mission. One way that happened was when mission societies or boards were formed and appealed to individuals for support. When mission work resulted in new congregations, the next temptation was to maintain a distinction between the growth and nurture of self-sufficient churches in a mission region and the work of mission.

By the 1930s, Mennonite missions were becoming integrated into denominational structures, and decisions about money and about relationships between churches were becoming more integrated.

But by 2001, the trend began to reverse; now individuals and groups who are attracted to some new initiative and have the ability to raise the funds, do it. "Our mission" becomes localized, the church's mission seems more distant, and one begins to wonder how this can be seen as *missio Dei*—God's mission. As Zambian theologian Amon Eddie Kasambala put it recently, the imbalances and disparities between churches in developed and developing nations will persist, as long as there remains the "misconception in understanding what mission is all about."

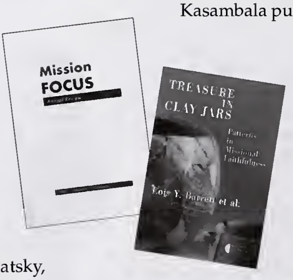
Kasambala claimed that at least four concepts were merely "the tip of the iceberg" for understanding mission. He labeled them 1) witness to pagans, 2) humanitarian activity on God's behalf, 3) church planting, 4) proclaiming liberation of the oppressed. He went on to argue for a definition of mission—"the mission of God in partnership"—where we pursue a common purpose. That purpose gets graded by how well the words "interdependence, mutuality, and cooperation" apply.

Mission Focus: Annual Review, which AMBS produces on behalf of a broad consortium of Mennonites, is one place where we check each other. At Mennonite World Conference (MWC) in Zimbabwe in 2003, numerous speakers examined what it meant to "share gifts in suffering and in joy."

Even Cynthia Peacock's prayer to open worship on World Sunday at MWC (included in the 2003 *Mission Focus* issue) placed us before God, asking how well we were attending to all the dimensions of **the mission of God in partnership,** asking "that we may be able to see the world as you [God] intend it to be."

This is much more than a global Mennonite matter. The mission of God, so we learn from Jesus' prayer in John 17, is that "they might be one," sent into the world by the Father and Son through the continuing guidance of the Holy Spirit "so that the world may believe." A broken *missio ecclesiae*—mission of the church—can undermine the authenticity of the *missio Dei*—God's mission. We better think about mission. ●

Resources



Mission Focus: Annual Review, published by the Mission Studies Center at AMBS. Edited by Walter Sawatsky, AMBS professor of church history and mission. See www.ambs.edu/php/welcome/wel_mission_focus.php

Beautiful Upon the Mountains: Biblical Essays on Mission, Peace, and the Reign of God, published by the Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2003. Edited by Mary H. Schertz, AMBS Professor of New Testament, and Ivan Friesen.

Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness, published by Eerdmans, 2004. Edited by Lois Y. Barrett, AMBS assistant professor of theology and Anabaptist studies; director, AMBS–Great Plains.

Journal of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education, edited by Art McPhee, associate professor of mission and intercultural studies.

Mission and Evangelism Institute: summer courses on a wide variety of mission and evangelism content.

Mission Studies Center: a cooperative venture among AMBS and several Mennonite mission organizations to plan for and supervise the training of workers for service under sending agencies of the church.

Programs of study in mission: Master of Divinity degree with an emphasis in mission and evangelism, and Master of Arts in Mission and Evangelism. See www.ambs.edu; select *Academic Information*, then *Programs of Study*, then *Areas of Study.*

Missiology Lectureship: scheduled for November 2005. ●

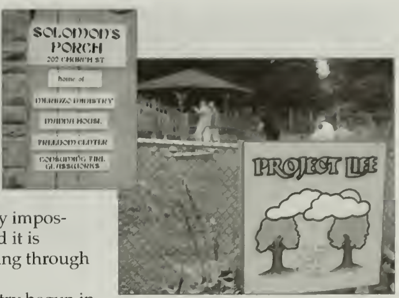
"Turnaround Churches" tour gives hope

Several churches in Kentucky and the bus that took students there and back became an AMBS classroom during a July weekend. Art McPhee, associate professor of mission and intercultural studies, led the tour in connection with the week-long summer course, "Turnaround Strategies for Local Churches."

Thirty people spent three days visiting central Appalachia, learning about churches and ministries that have shown remarkable growth. "We went to Appalachia because you wouldn't expect churches there to do well," Art explained. "But all of the places we visited showed dramatic turnaround in the last five years and have had a transforming impact on their communities."

The trip gave participants an opportunity to observe and learn about different kinds of ministry and the growth that resulted:

- An all-white church in Louisville had only 12 members before it merged with a predominantly African-American church. "Members of both groups expect God is doing a new thing among them," Art McPhee told participants.
- Ministry centers in eastern Kentucky have increased from four to 43 in just five years. Dr. Larry Martin, missions growth team leader for the Kentucky Baptist Convention in Louisville, said, "God is doing the humanly impossible and it is happening through prayer."
- A ministry begun in 1998 in three depressed coal mining communities has led to five new churches, 1,500 conversions to Christ and dozens of service ministries. Even the local government and schools have benefitted.
- Northside Baptist Church in Louisville had 30 active members four years ago and now has 400 members. Shirley Cox, Mission Service Corps missionary, told the group that this year alone the church has baptized more than 100 new converts.



"My hope was that people taking the bus tour would be inspired and gain a sense of hope for their own congregations," Art said.

Since the trip, he has heard from one congregation that has started a prayer group to help them search for what they can do in their own community. One participant told Art, "This is the first time in a long time that I have hope for my congregation." ●

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"Turnaround Churches" bus tour photos by participants Weldon Schloneger and Paul F. Thimm.

Campaign Report

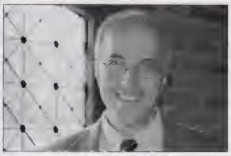
next Generation
AMBS Fund for Church Leadership

Next Generation, the fund-raising effort AMBS announced in December 2003, includes the following components. To find out more, see **www.ambs.edu/NextGeneration.**

	Goal	Received 9.30.04
AMBS Fund	$ 5,800,000	$ 6,254,547
Library and campus center	6,300,000	3,482,137
Chapel renovation	1,100,000	21,700
Preaching laboratory	170,000	177,200
Church Leadership Center	2,800,000	2,310,109
Scholarships	2,330,000	1,360,948
Endowed faculty chairs	1,500,000	1,156,883
Other		519,019
Total	$20,000,000	$15,282,543 76.4%

President's Window

The staying power of Christian witness depends upon how well we understand salvation and peacemaking as coming from the Kingdom of God rather than from our own strategies for social change. Unless we see mission and peacemaking as inseparable and as grounded in the cross and resurrection of Jesus, our witness will be stopped cold by forces of society, including:



- **Pressure to make the church subservient to governments or partisan politics.** Recent political speeches in the United States reveal again that Christianity does not make a good *state* religion. It is painful to watch candidates profess allegiance to the Prince of Peace while vowing to batter the enemy into submission. The Christ who said, "My kingdom is not of this world" cannot be domesticated into nationalist or political partisan agenda.
- **Pressure to water down the gospel to avoid offense to other religions.** Identifying oneself as a Christian does not always help win acceptance in universities, professional guilds and other settings of intellectual ferment. With other world religions so present, it may be seen as a violation of etiquette to make exclusive claims about Jesus.
- **Pressure to reduce Jesus to myth or mere teacher.** Recent popular books have saturated the market with ideas that undercut truth claims about Christ. Based on dubious scholarly research, best-sellers claim that Jesus never existed (the gospel is an adapted pagan redemption myth) or that the Gnostic *Gospel of Thomas* (which portrays Jesus as a non-divine mystic) is more accurate than the Gospel of John.

Rather than being disheartened by such developments, we should see these as opportunities for conversation and witness. What spiritual hunger and what questions lie behind such trends? We need to demonstrate how God-with-us in Jesus Christ transforms our lives and someday will transform all creation. We can share possessions, love the enemy and care for people at the margins. Such peacemaking *is* mission when it is grounded in living relationship with the Prince of Peace. We will need to rely on disciplines of prayer and worship to sustain our witness. Then we must speak our faith in winsome ways that point others to Jesus rather than to our own character or achievements.

—J. Nelson Kraybill

Alumni News

Sally Weaver Glick's (Master of Divinity 2000) book, *In Tune With God: The Art of Congregational Discernment,* was published in October by Faith and Life Resources.

Dawn Ruth Nelson (Master of Divinity 1979) received the Doctor of Ministry degree from Lancaster Theological Seminary. Her dissertation examines the characteristics of spirituality in her grandmother's life and the beginning of the Christian Spirituality program at AMBS.

James Reusser (Bachelor of Divinity 1954) was honored on September 19 at Waterloo (Ont.) North Mennonite Church for 50 years of ministry. **Helen Reusser** (student 1951–1952) also was honored for her service in congregational and conference ministry.

Panorama

AMBS dedicates C.J. and Wilma Dyck Guesthouse

The home that C.J. and Wilma Dyck built next to the seminary campus has become a seminary guesthouse. C.J., professor emeritus of Anabaptist and sixteenth century studies, and Wilma are now living in Normal, Ill., and Mark and Sue Weidner, who owned the home from 1998 to 2004, have moved to Pennsylvania.

At the dedication service Nelson Kraybill said, "Faculty and students from years past tell of lively conversation, food and fellowship in the Dyck home. This was a guest house long before we decided to call it that. It is the privilege of AMBS to name this space for two people who gave their lives so generously to the work of the church in Elkhart and around the world."

Mary E. Klassen

At a dedication service on September 15, C.J. and Wilma Dyck cut a ribbon across the path from the campus to the house they built which is now a seminary guesthouse named in their honor.

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The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor and Designer: Mary E. Klassen
Photos by Mary E. Klassen

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> **We just want to be part of the church that is working to rediscover the original vision of the Anabaptists, which was to follow Jesus and share him wherever they lived.**—Doug Lehman

Christ with her is to simply show her I care. Recently I began meeting with her for Bible study.

"Reaching out isn't as hard or scary as we thought it would be. It's a matter of building relationships. In doing that, God opens the doors. We don't have to force doors open."

Doug has found many open doors with the men and boys in the neighborhood while shoveling snow in the narrow neighborhood streets in winter and walking alongside struggling families through the narrow passages of conflict.

"Lee, a neighbor across the street, has been a recluse," Doug says. "But recently we've seen a real change in him. One of his daughters came to our door and talked to us about how her dad, with whom she struggled, is changing.

"He was going for counseling and was easier to relate with, the daughter told us. She thought it was because of our befriending him. That tells us a lot about the value of just being neighbors and friends, even though it can take a lot of time to build that."

Modeling a missional way of life: Their own families of origin and Mennonite background laid the foundation for their ability to build solid relationships, they say. In their youth, they both attended Shalom Christian Academy, an Anabaptist elementary and high school in Chambersburg sponsored by Franklin Conference. Then Doug went to Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., to prepare for youth ministry.

"My parents modeled a lot for me as a boy," Doug says. "We were heavily involved in this community, where I began to love these people and desire this kind of ministry, and [that's] why I probably had no fear in coming back here.

"It's no big deal for me to go knock on someone's door here, day or night, because my dad taught me how that can be a natural part of life. Loving people was just what we did. It was just who we were."

Jen says her folks, Jeryl and Glenda Martin, also reached out to many people and often invited them into their home. Youth Evangelism Service also broadened her horizons. "One of the biggest struggles for our team was learning what it meant to live out Isaiah 61—binding up the brokenhearted and turning ashes into beauty.... Living here has given Doug and me an excellent opportunity to see what that means for us and our family."

Doug and Jen—who now also relate to World Harvest Outreach, an interdenominational fellowship in the area—say that developing a missional lifestyle in North America is challenging. The abundance of material comforts, social schedules and family ties can fill up one's life, leaving scant time for building new relationships.

"In some ways, it might be harder to be a missionary here in the States than it would be in Africa, where one would live far away from one's usual circle of family and friends," Jen says. "Don't get me wrong, those are all good obligations, and we struggle to find a balance.

"People who don't live in this community have a lot of misconceptions about what people are like. But these friends make great neighbors."

Doug says, "We just want to be part of the church that is working to rediscover the original vision of the Anabaptists, which was to follow Jesus and share him wherever they lived."

Laurie L. Oswald is News Service director for Mennonite Church USA.

We are not what we buy but what Christ makes us

Lynn Miller says the American Dream is not the Christian's call, and he strives to help people dream God's dreams.

In his work as stewardship theologian for MMA, the stewardship agency of Mennonite Church USA, he helps people such as Doug and Jen Lehman (see related story) give themselves away as God's gift to their communities and the world.

That means helping people see that all parts of their lives—time, money, talent and health—are wrapped up as one gift package.

"In leading seminars on holistic stewardship, I ask people what happens to their offering on Sunday morning," he says. "They say, 'It gets spent.' Precisely. I tell them God wants to spend them, that they need to give their entire lives to God as an offering."

"Our North American culture tells us we are what we buy and the amount of our salary is the amount of our worth. In God's kingdom, that is not true. In this kingdom, we are what Christ makes us, and our worth is meant to be used for nurturing the worth of others."

MMA helps people—through education, financial planning and other services—to connect faith with all parts of their lives. Those interested in developing a lifestyle based on holistic stewardship can start with MMA educational resources at www.mma-online.org— ***Laurie L. Oswald***

An open letter to Mennonite Church USA

Gordon G. Scoville lives in Broadus, Mont. Recently he served as interim pastor at Beemer (Neb.) Mennonite Church.

Dear fellow believers,

I speak to you as an ordained Mennonite pastor who has never before discerned a call to voice a position bearing on America's partisan electoral politics. I sense, however, that in 2004 such silence would be a grievous sin of omission.

I am torn over what to say. On the one hand, I share the classic Anabaptist commitment to the New Testament as authorization for the church to be that people whose difference from the world demonstrates a separation marking the refusal to be too closely identified with anything in the world (see Philippians 3:17-4:1; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 1 John 2:12-17; et al.). I rejoiced therefore at J. Nelson Kraybill's recent reminder ("A Christian Pledge of Allegiance," *The Mennonite*, Aug. 3) that Christians should distance themselves from the American tendency—fueled by both Republicans and Democrats—toward idolatrous glorification of nationalism and war.

> **The war in Iraq signals that further acquiescence will incur a spiraling rise in bloodshed, fiscal woe and hatred for the United States around the world.**

On the other hand, this year I experience myself startled perhaps like that of the exiles who experienced surprise at the counsel of Jeremiah to seek the welfare even of Babylon (Jeremiah 29:7). I am shocked to discern that a public declaration of my position in a partisan election is essential for the fulfillment of my part in seeking what is best for America. This declaration can be thought of not as an ideological alliance with either of the major parties but only as an ad hoc or occasional response to a political emergency in the nation. (See the refusal of alliance with grand ideologies in favor of calling "for the elimination of specific visible abuses" in *The Christian Witness to the State* by John Howard Yoder, Faith & Life Press, 1964.)

The emergency derives centrally from the Bush administration's pursuit in Iraq of the National Security Strategy (NSS) proclaimed and published in 2002. This proclamation arrogated to military might a preeminence unequaled in the history of American foreign policy. The strategy presumes an imperial claim that democracy can be equated with free markets, which can in turn be exported through force. Such exportation relies on "preemptive action" that elevates military power to the status of main determinant in international relations.

In a post-9-11 climate of fright, both the press and Congress acquiesced to this elevation for fear of being branded "unpatriotic." The advancement of the NSS has depended on a generalized fearfulness whose timidity cedes the substance of human relationships—local and global—to the forces of militarization. Even (or perhaps especially) conservatives can be outraged at this surrender to concentrated government power. For example, Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, scholars with long-standing Republican and conservative credentials, have argued that NSS-like "authoritarianism overseas generates authoritarianism at home" (*America Alone: The Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order*, Cambridge University Press, 2004). The war in Iraq signals that further acquiescence will incur a spiraling rise in bloodshed, fiscal woe and hatred for the United States around the world.

We do not want the final brake on authoritarian policy to be the ruination that always results from the effort to make power absolute. To seek the welfare of America, on Nov. 2, citizens must use the ballot box to stop the acquiescence. To be sure, the Democratic party remains wedded to a pattern of moral cowardice that has marked it for years. The party's candidate is conspicuously flawed. But this election is not first about the two parties; neither is it fundamentally about liberals versus conservatives. It is a referendum on whether we wish to have an authoritarian future. I will vote no.

Your brother in Christ,
Gordon G. Scoville

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Being a gringa in Guatemala**—Julie Hart
- **From peasant farmer to academic administrator**—Lakshmi Hanumanthappa
- **A spork in the road**—Jeremy Graber

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

New Sunday school curriculum launched

Gather 'Round *lessons will let all ages study the same Bible texts each Sunday.*

They said it is both scary and wonderful all at the same time. They said it is both fun and exhausting. They said it is a daunting, fantastic journey. "They" are writers, editors and resource people from Mennonite Church USA, Mennonite Church Canada and Church of the Brethren who met Sept. 19-23 at a writers' conference for the new Sunday school curriculum project, *Gather 'Round: Hearing and Sharing God's Good News.*

For five intense days at Camp Alexander Mack near Milford, Ind., the group embodied the title for the curriculum: gathering 'round to worship with the Bible texts, pray, look for God's good news in the text for each age level and plan lesson outlines.

"It is a wonderful, scary feeling to be at the beginning of a new venture in children's curriculum," said Eleanor Snyder, director of Faith and Life Resources of Mennonite Publishing Network.

"What I saw at the conference were writers deeply committed to children's faith formation and finding creative ways to hear and share God's story."

Elsie Rempel, director of Christian education and nurture for Mennonite Church Canada, said that one exciting characteristic of the new curriculum is that all ages get to work with the same texts at the same time.

"A parents/caregivers class provides adults with the chance to engage the Bible text at their own level and also helps them learn how to talk and pray with their children about its themes during the week," she said. "We believe it is important to equip parents to be more effective faith nurturers at home."

Writers at the conference were Susan Fuentes (Church of the Brethren); Rebecca Seiling (Mennonite Church Canada); Dianna Ullery (Church of the Brethren); Carol Duerksen (Mennonite Church USA); Sarah Pinnell (Mennonite Church Canada) and Frank Ramirez (Church of the Brethren).

Anna Speicher, curriculum project director, saw the conference as a significant step in the curriculum development. She not only looks ahead to the future of *Gather 'Round* but also acknowledges its predecessor, *Jubilee.*

"We are dedicated to making this a worthy successor to *Jubilee,*" Speicher said. "We benefit from the work invested in that fine curriculum and from the insights gleaned over a decade of its usage.

Gather 'Round is slated to begin in the fall of 2006, with the first quarter available for congregations to preview early in 2006.—*Carol Duerksen for Mennonite Church USA News Service*

> We are dedicated to making this a worthy successor to *Jubilee.*
> —Anna Speicher

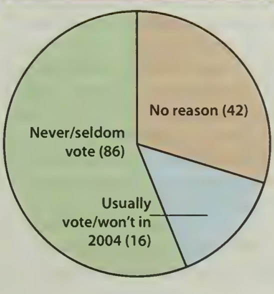
The Mennonite's readers go for Kerry

More than 1,200 respond to a postcard survey, but many won't vote at all.

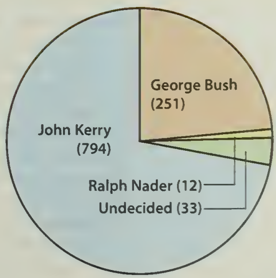
If readers of *The Mennonite* who participated in a postcard survey are any indication, Mennonite Church USA members will lean toward John Kerry in the U.S. presidential election today (Nov. 2). A question posted on *The Mennonite*'s Web site for the past four weeks revealed the same preference (see page 5). Neither exercise is statistically reliable as an indicator of broader sentiments among all members of Mennonite Church USA.

On 687 cards returned by Oct. 26, 1,240 readers participated in the first-ever survey of voting preferences in a U.S. presidential election by *The Mennonite* or its predecessors. Twelve percent of those who responded said they would not vote (see graph). Of those who planned to vote, 73 percent intended to vote for Senator John Kerry, and 23 percent intended to vote for President Bush. Three percent were still undecided, one percent planned to vote for consumer activist Ralph Nader, and there were two write-in votes for Green Party candidate David Cobb.

Although there was no place on the ballot for comments, several dozen respondents explained their preferences. The most common explanations related to abortion and the war in Iraq. Some who believed abortion was the most important issue planned to vote against Kerry; some who thought the war was most important planned to vote against Bush. Two readers explained that they would not vote because they are anarchists. One respondent spent 23 cents for a stamp on the card to say, "I don't tell for whom I plan to vote."



WON'T VOTE



WILL VOTE

Council helps church stay spiritually fit

OKs new Rocky Mountain conference with more study on membership issues

Laurie L. Oswald

Margie Wiens, representing South Central Conference, discusses funding for Mennonite Church USA with her table group at the Constituency Leaders Council meeting.

As Mennonite Church USA grows, the role of the Constituency Leaders Council (CLC) is also growing in its identity as an elder body called to help the denomination stay spiritually fit and focused on Jesus Christ.

Kurt Horst, conference minister for Allegheny Mennonite Conference, challenged his fellow CLC members—an advisory group to Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board—to examine how deeply their area conferences and congregations focus on the purposes of Jesus Christ in the midst of challenges facing the growing denomination.

> The Baby Boomer generation—which is many of us—[must] throw out our belief that affluence and entitlement will save us.
> —Kurt Horst

Horst led worship during the meeting, held Oct. 8-10 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center in Mt. Pleasant, Pa., as one way to help CLC seek wisdom from God in the midst of its challenges. After two days of talking and praying about issues such as funding, identity, antiracism and the role of area conferences, Horst called leaders to help their constituencies prepare for Charlotte 2005, a joint assembly of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada to be held July 4-9, 2005, in North Carolina. The assembly theme is based on Acts 4:20: "We cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard."

"Peter and John proclaimed that there is no salvation in any other," Horst said. "We must believe that or we won't have any stories to tell. ... The question we must ask is whether Mennonite Church USA believes that there is no other way than Jesus.

"The Baby Boomer generation—which is many of us—[must] throw out our belief that affluence and entitlement will save us. ... Jesus wants to save us, to transform us. If we speak out in the name of Jesus and see transformation take place in the name of Jesus, then we will have something to say at Charlotte."

Being rooted in Christ is important for a denomination that is growing "new branches" as a body, with Christ as its head, leaders believe. A sign of this growth came when CLC welcomed four area conferences—Franklin, Lancaster, New York and South Central—into full membership within the denomination. The four groups affirmed moving from provisional to full membership.

"In our discernment process," said Darrell Baer, conference minister for Franklin Conference, "we discovered that while we consider ourselves a 'conservative conference,' we have not done well in defining what that really is. And we also discovered that our people don't really know why they are Mennonite, since many of us have always been Mennonite."

Several other CLC members gave reports on their conferences, including Lauren Martin for Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference, which will be disbanded if delegates at Charlotte 2005 affirm the proposal to create a new conference called Mountain States Mennonite Conference. Jim Schrag, executive director for Mennonite Church USA, will take the CLC's affirmation to the Executive Board, which in turn may bring the recommendation for delegate approval in Charlotte.

Many CLC members affirmed the proposal, including Mary Ellen Meyer of Indiana-Michigan Conference.

"I affirm what I see as some careful work with the relational authority model," said Meyer, "[which found] a creative way to balance between authoritarianism on the one hand and a model that lacks sufficient authority on the other."

All 11 of CLC's table groups affirmed the proposal, with some groups also inviting Mountain States to address membership issues.

"We affirm this proposal," one table group spokesperson said, "and also further anticipate that the congregations involved will continue to dialogue on the confession of faith and membership guidelines with as much care as they have in discussing their joining the conference."

Galen Kauffman, CLC member of North Central Mennonite Conference, reported how his conference plans to vote in June whether it will become a full member of the denomination (see page 6). Out of 21 area conferences, North Central is the only one still holding provisional status. All others have become full members.—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Scholars address faith and politics

Jim Bishop

Carol Scheppard (center) of Bridgewater College and Ted Grimsrud (right) of Eastern Mennonite University respond to audience questions after their presentation, "Believers and Political Authority in the Bible." Brian Martin Burkholder (left), EMU campus pastor, led opening worship and moderated the sessions.

U.S. presidential election is the context for 15th Believers Church Conference.

If 16th-century Anabaptist leader Michael Sattler were alive today, would he vote in the U.S. presidential election?

Responding to this question from the audience, speaker Gerald Biesecker-Mast said, "Likely no, but not out of apathy. ... Sattler probably would abstain but would be alarmed at the notion that doing so was an act of indifference [and] supporting the status quo."

Biesecker-Mast, professor of communication at Bluffton (Ohio) University, presented an outline of the "righteousness and mercy" motif as practiced by early Anabaptist Christians. He noted that the group's determination to combine "peace with justice in the social order" and that "Scripture, not the hangman" should be the final appeal in matters of civil authority versus freedom of worship and practice.

The question of whether Christian faith promotes involvement in politics or whether that same faith directs Christians to values beyond the political realm came to the fore repeatedly at the 15th Believers Church Conference Sept. 23-25. Some 230 people were registered.

The gathering was co-hosted by Eastern Mennonite University and Bridgewater College, both in Harrisburg, Va., with sessions divided between the two campuses.

Using a format that combined scholarly addresses, panel presentations, audience questions and worship, the conference focused on the meaning of citizenship in the United States from a Believers Church point of view and asked what it means to be citizens of the world's lone superpower and members of the body of Christ.

Some participants said international friends made them feel responsible for voting when their friends said, "I don't have a voice, but you have to have a voice" in influencing U.S. actions.

"What many people are calling for is a vote against what has been going on. It's a cry of the soul. Maybe there's nothing you can say yes to now, but you can say no," said panelist Earl Martin.

He and his wife, Pat Hostetter Martin—lifelong Mennonites and 25-year Mennonite Central Committee workers—said they grew up unfamiliar with politics and "hardly aware of world problems," Pat said. That changed when they volunteered to help refugees in Vietnam, where their friends included a couple whose baby was killed when a U.S. Navy flare plunged through their roof.

Although Earl Martin votes, the couple focus more on peace vigils, a community voluntary gas-tax project and refusal to pay a military telephone-bill surcharge.

Mark Thiessen Nation, an associate professor at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, spoke on the subject of his upcoming biography of noted Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder. Living among French Mennonites following the devastation of World War II, Yoder learned and then taught that true pacifism and Christianity are extremely difficult, Nation said. Decades later at this conference, Nation said, "I was shocked to read Mennonites saying 'How can we be pacifists after Sept. 11?' What rock had people been living under?"

"We have so much to appreciate in this country, religious freedom not least," said Ted Grimsrud, professor of religion at EMU. "However, many of our nation's practices resemble all too closely the imperialism of the biblical empires. It is as if we have two Americas: America the pioneer democracy and America the dominant empire."

Conference planners are working with Pandora Press Canada for a forthcoming book in the *Studies in the Believers Church Tradition* series that will continue the conversation.—*Chris Edwards, a freelance writer from Harrisonburg, Va.*

> I was shocked to read Mennonites saying, "How can we be pacifists after Sept. 11?" What rock had people been living under?
> —Mark Thiessen Nation

Quilts tell French about Anabaptists

French Mennonites explain who they are and what they believe to tourists.

People were attentive and asked questions for a while after [each] lecture. There were numerous questions about the daily life and practice of the Amish of North America.
—Donald Kraybill

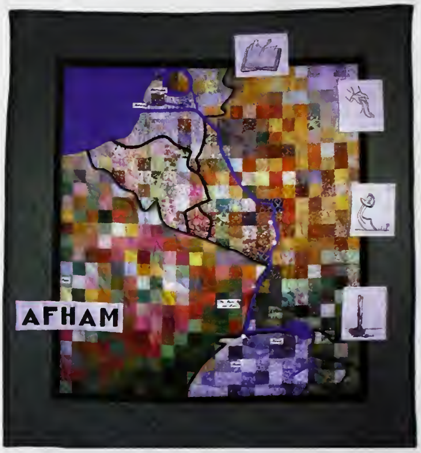
Ten years ago a patchwork quilt festival began in Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, a small village in France's Vosges Mountains. This year the exhibit, held Sept. 16-19, hosted upward of 18,000 visitors who flocked to Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines from all over Europe.

Though most come to see the handiwork of artists from around the world and not because they are interested in religious history, a stunning display of Amish and Mennonite quilts, furniture and clothes piqued the curiosity of these tourists. Many were intrigued enough to attend lectures about the religious beliefs of the makers of the pieces in the show.

"The split between those now called the Amish and Mennonites took place in 1693," said Neal Blough. "A Swiss Anabaptist elder named Jacob Amman moved into [this town] in Alsace (Eastern France). In 1993, the French Mennonite Historical Society sponsored a colloquium in Sainte Marie to study the history of the split."

With his wife, Janie, Blough has spent the past 30 years working in Paris. Supported by Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness, the couple serves on the staff of the Paris Mennonite Center and as a resource to Mennonite congregations in France.

Through the colloquium, townspeople learned of their historical ties to Anabaptists and that the quilt festival was begun to attract tourists. Today it is the largest exhibit of its kind in Europe, with displays from five continents and more than 400 textile vendors. Having spread to three other towns in addition to Sainte-Marie, 18 separate exhibits were shown. This year, in celebration of the event's 10th anniversary, the French Anabaptist and Mennonite Historical Association was given a place of honor.



Thierry Huckel

This quilt, contributed by the French Anabaptist and Mennonite Historical Association (AFHAM), symbolizes traditional Anabaptist theology and life practices. The Bible, with Christ at the center, is the foundation of Mennonite faith. The Christian community is composed of adult members baptized on their confession of faith. The map on the quilt shows important historical Mennonite and Amish towns in Europe, including Zürich, Berne, Montbéliard, Strasbourg and Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines.

"The French Mennonites had a wonderful opportunity to explain who they are and what they believe," Blough said. "They are doing a creative job in responding to the opportunity being presented to them."

The historical society sponsored a large book display and provided staff to answer visitors' questions. Along with the Bienenberg Theological Seminary, the Paris Mennonite Center has helped produce a series of books on Anabaptist history and theology. These books—including Marie-Thérèse Bernard's French translation of Donald B. Kraybill's *The Riddle of Amish Culture* (2001)—were on display over the four-day weekend. Finished just in time for the event, the translation of Kraybill's book was of special interest to visitors, as the author was on hand to sign his volume. The 200 copies of the study of Amish social and cultural change in the 20th century that "explains how they have thrived by negotiating with modernity" were all sold by the festival's end.

"I was astonished at the size of the event that is now just 10 years old," Kraybill said. A senior fellow at the Young Center for Anabaptists and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College, he spoke to crowded lecture halls on "Cultural Clashes Between the Amish and the State," and "Are Amish Women Happy?"

"People were attentive and asked questions for a while after [each] lecture," he said. "There were numerous questions about the daily life and practice of the Amish of North America."

Blough, who teaches at the theological seminary in Bienenberg, also contributed as a guest lecturer. He spoke to audiences about how the Amish accept or reject technology in comparison with Jacques Ellul's understanding of our modern technical society.

A period of discussion about Western society's values that form decisions about use of technology followed Blough's lecture. "For me it was a fascinating way to be able to speak publicly about faith in the context of contemporary society," he said.

Other lecturers included French Mennonite historian of the Amish Robert Baecher and Jacques Légeret, a Swiss journalist who is also a quilt collector and author of books about the Amish.—*Mennonite Mission Network News Service*

Lessons from Brazil taken to Bangladesh

One $150 tank will provide a year of arsenic-free water for a single family.

As Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers in rural Bangladesh explore ways to help families avoid naturally occurring arsenic in well water, one of the most promising technologies is a cistern system used in Brazil.

While most of Bangladesh is more water-logged than arid, arsenic beneath the surface poses a danger. An estimated 28 to 35 million people in Bangladesh are drinking arsenic-contaminated groundwater. A World Health Organization report predicts that in the next decade in most of southern Bangladesh, almost one in every 10 adult deaths will be a result of cancer triggered by arsenic poisoning.

"Rainwater is an obvious solution," says Roger Sydney, an environmental engineer coordinating MCC Bangladesh's arsenic program. "If harvested properly, rainwater can be a source of clean, arsenic-free water. The question becomes how to save and store the water for the dry periods."

The Brazilian cistern design is significantly larger and less expensive than tanks currently being built in Bangladesh, says Sydney. So far, three tanks have been built based on the Brazilian design, which involves stacking concrete rings that each hold 2,500 liters of water. The largest tank built is a 15,000-liter system that costs approximately $400. Sydney estimates that a 5,000-liter tank costing about $150 could provide safe drinking water year-round for a single family.

Sydney notes that rainwater harvesting is in its infancy in Bangladesh. People use rainwater for cooking and note that it does not color the rice, as the iron in well water does, and cooking with rainwater gives dahl, or cooked lentils, a good flavor.

Roger Sydney

Lakhon Chandra Paul and his daughters are using a 5,000-liter tank provided by Mennonite Central Committee Bangladesh at his house at Lalpur village near Maijdee.

But as families cook with contaminated water, the arsenic content becomes even more concentrated, Sydney says. Families ingest arsenic with each serving of food. Arsenic in groundwater has no smell or taste, and it becomes more difficult to convince residents that the water is contaminated.

"Traditionally, rainwater has been associated with sickness, and Bangladeshis are afraid to get wet in the rain or ingest 'raw' rainwater, as they believe that they will catch a severe cold," Sydney says. But in areas highly contaminated by arsenic, people are willing to drink rainwater.

In addition to rainwater harvesting, MCC Bangladesh is promoting a filter developed in Bangladesh to help remove arsenic, and education campaigns on the dangers of arsenic.—*Marla Pierson Lester of MCC News Service*

Interfaith team will deliver aid to Darfur

As world leaders use the words "ethnic cleansing" and "genocide" to denounce the violence that has uprooted rural populations in the Darfur region of Sudan, a group of Sudanese Christians and Muslims is working together in Darfur to help the victims of these war crimes.

The Sudan Council of Churches is doing relief work from bases in two of Darfur's towns, Nyala and Zalingei. Its aid workers go into a surrounding countryside that is reeling from the destruction of hundreds of villages and dotted with makeshift camps. Since May, the SCC has distributed aid from international donors to several thousand households. People living in camps received food, farming tools, seeds, donkeys, cooking utensils, soap, water cans, clothing, plastic sheeting and blankets. The SCC also built simple shelters and several schools that are now crowded to several times their capacity.

It is dangerous work, as attacks on aid vehicles are increasing. On Aug. 30, the SCC sent a Land Cruiser to a camp north of Nyala and distributed kerosene stoves. There are many reports that women gathering firewood outside their camps have been raped, and the stoves would help some women avoid the risk. The death toll in the last 20 months is estimated at 50,000, and the number of people displaced to camps is more than 1.5 million. Mennonite Central Committee is sending $850,000 of relief supplies for the SCC to distribute in Darfur's camps and food worth $3.4 million from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to be distributed by the U.N. World Food Program.—*Tim Shenk of Mennonite Central Committee News Service*

It is dangerous work, as attacks on aid vehicles are increasing.

Continued from page 5

Misinterpretation of Christianity

I feel discouraged when readers of *The Mennonite* call upon us to vote for Bush based on his opposition to abortion and same-sex marriages (Readers Say, Aug. 17 and Oct. 19). No less an entrenched institution than the Vatican opined in a 2002 document that "a political commitment to a single, isolated aspect of the Church's social doctrine does not exhaust one's responsibility toward the common good."

Bush has led us into an unjust war, costing not only over 1,000 American lives but countless (literally "countless" because Bush has determined these are figures that will not be tallied) innocent Iraqi citizens. He presided over numerous executions as governor of Texas.

His record on health care and the environment—both quality-of-life issues—is abysmal. Finally, Bush has, for the sake of tax cuts that largely benefit the wealthy, run up a deficit that neither my nor my children's generation can pay off. That, too, is a quality-of-life issue, since paying off the debt will inevitably be accomplished at the expense of health, education and welfare.

If Bush is operating out of the courage of his Christian convictions, I think there has been a severe misinterpretation of Christianity somewhere along the way. I could not, as a Christian, ever vote for Bush.—*Rebecca L. Gaff, Rolling Prairie, Ind.*

Assigning blame without knowledge

An Oct. 5 article in News Digest describes two Christian Peacemaker Teams workers who were beaten and injured in Israel. Who were the attackers? The *Washington Post*, Reuters and Fox all decline to name the culprits because there is no evidence yet who did the attacks. *The Mennonite* puts the blame squarely on the "settlers" and says "the settlers" attacked and "the settlers" whipped.

In Journalism 101 one learns never to assign blame before sufficient knowledge is obtained. That is the textbook definition of prejudice. It is amusing to note that *The Mennonite* has spent the last three years since Sept. 11, 2001, cautioning people not to jump to conclusions about Muslims and other groups. So what does *The Mennonite* do when an attack occurs in Israel? They eagerly jump to a conclusion.—*Robert Erck, Darien, Ill.*

Ascetic, not acetic

A Readers Say letter by Mary Ann Templeton (Sept. 21) had a wonderful message. But some misunderstanding could result from using "acetic." My dictionary gives this definition for acetic: pertaining to or of producing vinegar. It seems the word "ascetic" should have been used. The dictionary definition is: given to strict self-denial. Hopefully, others have already pointed out this apparent error.—*Dwight Wratchford, Martinsburg, W.Va.*

Phil Ruth

Tribute for John Ruth

John L. Ruth was honored by the presentation of a *festschrift* ("festive writing") on Oct. 10 at Salford Mennonite Church in Harleysville, Pa., by John E. Sharp (far right) and Joseph S. Miller. The collection of essays—written and published as a tribute to Ruth's life and work—is entitled *The Measure of My Days, Engaging the Life and Thought of John L. Ruth*. Sixteen writers wrote 18 chapters on the general theme of Mennonite community. The book was presented at the conclusion of the morning worship service and came as a surprise to Ruth.

Sharp said in the book's introduction that it is "a tribute to John Ruth, pastor, professor, historian, storyteller, filmmaker and videographer. ... He has exercised these vocations within and for the spiritual family called Mennonite."

Left to right: Ruth responds during the Sunday morning worship service while Gene Kropf and James Longacre look on.—*Mennonite Historical Committee*

RESOURCES

Finding God in the Movies: 33 Films of Reel Faith by Barsotti, Catherine M. and Robert K. Johnston (Baker Book House, 2004, $14.99) examines such topics as racial reconciliation, forgiveness and service through such films as *Billy Elliot*, *Life Is Beautiful*, *The Truman Show* and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. It includes discussion questions and recommended video clips useful to youth leaders and pastors.

Back to the Well: Women's Encounters With Jesus in the Gospels by Frances Taylor Gench (Westminster John Knox Press, 2004, $19.95) explores six Gospel texts in which women encounter Jesus and opens up new possibilities for reading these texts.

101 Key Terms in Philosophy and Their Importance for Theology by Kelly James Clark, Richard Lints and James K.A. Smith (Westminster John Knox Press, 2004, $16.95) provides easy access to key terms in philosophy and how they are understood and used in theology.

Romans by John E. Toews (Herald Press, 2004, $24.99), the latest in the Believers Church Bible Commentary Series, is for all who seek to understand the original message of Scripture and its meaning for today—Sunday school teachers, members of Bible study groups, students, pastors and other seekers.

On Jordan's Stormy Banks: Lessons from the Book of Deuteronomy by James E. Brenneman (Herald Press, 2004, $9.99) explores how Deuteronomy helps us understand the entire Bible and addresses our human longings.

MennoFolk: Mennonite and Amish Folk Traditions by Ervin Beck (Herald Press, 2004, $15.99) offers the abundance of Mennonite life—jokes, origin tales, trickster tales and the Reggie Jackson urban legend—along with analysis of folk traditions in the context of Mennonite and Amish history, culture and beliefs.

Katelyn's Affection by Kirsten L. Klassen (Herald Press, 2004, $11.99) is a coming-of-age story about a teenage girl and her relationships.

Autumn Years: Taking the Contemplative Path by Robert H. King and Elizabeth M. King (Continuum, 2004, $17.95) addresses people in the second half of life (see review, Oct. 19, page 30).

Autumn: A Spiritual Biography of the Season, edited by Gary Schmidt and Susan M. Felch (SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2004, $22.99) collects essays and poetry by various writers under five categories—change, endings, work, harvest and thanksgiving—and includes illustrations by Mary Azarian (see review, Oct. 19, page 30).

The Science of God: An Introduction to Scientific Theology by Alister E. McGrath (Eerdmans, 2004, $25) is a concise guide to McGrath's three-volume work *A Scientific Theology*. McGrath summarizes his major project and sketches out its implications for many aspects of Christian doctrine.

When the Rain Returns: Toward Justice and Reconciliation in Palestine and Israel (American Friends Service Committee, 2004, $15 plus postage) is based on the experience of an international group of 11 Quakers and three friends of Quakers who traveled to the region in June 2002. A study guide ($5) is also available. To order, call 215-241-7048.

Anabaptism and Reformation in Switzerland: An Historical and Theological Analysis of the Dialogues Between Anabaptists and Reformers by John Howard Yoder (Pandora Press, 2004, $39), published first in the 1960s, is available for the first time in English. It includes a bibliography and indices.

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CALENDAR

Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., "Farming With Values That Last 2005: Growers and Eaters in Communion", Feb. 25-27. Contact Cheryl Paulovitch at cheryl@laurelville.org, 800-839-1021 or 724-423-2056 x2423, or Greg Bowman (exhibits) at gbowman@fast.net. Brochures available, see PDF version at www.laurelville.org > adult/family programs.

WORKERS

Hankee, Seth, was licensed Oct. 31 as associate pastor at Greenmonte Mennonite Church, Stuarts Draft, Va.

Landis, Ken, was licensed and installed Oct. 3 as pastor at First Mennonite Church of New Bremen, Lowville, N.Y.

Risser, Ben, was ordained Sept. 12 as pastor at Ridgeway Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Zuercher, Martin, was ordained Sept. 26 as pastor at Chestnut Ridge Mennonite Church, Orrville, Ohio.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Beiler, Cameron Wayne, Sept. 3, to Chris and Megan Beiler, Gap, Pa.

Beck, Bradon Matthew, Aug. 29, to Jason and Brandi Beck, Archbold, Ohio.

Beck, Jackson Cooper, Aug. 18, to Shawn and Harmony Beck, Archbold, Ohio.

Bergen, Rivers Rose, Sept. 29, to A.J. and Jami Bauder Bergen, Fort Collins, Colo.

Brubaker, Anna Kate, Aug. 18, to Tony and Rebecca DeCubellis Brubaker, Lancaster, Pa.

Brubaker, Sydney Elizabeth, Aug. 13, to Brenton and Kathy Brubaker, Lancaster, Pa.

Buhr, Xander Lee, Sept. 3, to Lorne and Carie Voth Buhr, Altona, Man.

Clemmer, Kate Elizabeth, Sept. 9, to Ronald and Carla Clemmer, Telford, Pa.

Eberly, Evan John, Sept. 25, to Peter and Natalie Lehman Eberly, Harrisonburg, Va.

Eby, Donavon Paul, Aug. 31, to Brett Eby and Jennifer Rainwater, Leola, Pa.

Gillespie, Sean Connor, Oct. 6, to Stephen and Jessica Dengler Gillespie, Souderton, Pa.

Harms, Austin Trent, Oct. 10, to Ashley and Teri-Lynn Heinrichs Harms, Winnipeg, Man.

Heinrich, Maddie Jo, Aug. 30, to Hans and Nichole Mast Heinrich, Pleasant Valley, Pa.

Hershberger, Conner LaMont, July 23, to Conway and Cassie Hershberger, Elkhart, Ind.

Ivey, Michael Henry, Oct. 9, to Darren and Dusti Ediger Ivey, Topeka, Kan.

Klopfenstein, Samuel Douglas, Oct. 3, to Dereck and Marisa Schipani Klopfenstein, Goshen, Ind.

Miller, Devin Nathaniel, Sept. 29, to Mark and Wendy Wyse Miller, Hesston, Kan.

Saupe, Casey Marie, Aug. 23, to Rodney and Rockelle Martin Saupe, Elkhart, Ind.

Sellars, Jacob Daniel, Oct. 7, to Jonathan and Addy Sellars, Telford, Pa.

Skelton, Sydney Ruth, Aug. 28, to Todd and Amy Beachy Skelton, Portland, Ore.

Sun, Joshua, Aug. 31, to Qiang Sun and Yifan Wang, Harrisonburg, Va.

Trissel, Ian Isaac, Sept. 24, to Cory and Charity Trissel, Harrisonburg, Va.

Yoder, Elyse Anne, Sept. 19, to Mark and Deb Heiser Yoder, Goshen, Ind.

MARRIAGES

Amand/Ruhl: Megan Amand, Lancaster, Pa., and Cedric Ruhl, Lancaster, June 29 in Lancaster.

Britton/Sweigart: Lisa Britton, Philadelphia, and Jon M. Sweigart, Philadelphia, June 5 at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Philadelphia.

Byler/Peachey: Seth Byler, Gap, Pa., and Glenda Peachey, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 12 in Willow Street, Pa.

Domer/Wittmer: James Domer, Hartville, Ohio, and Christa Wittmer, Hartville, Oct. 2 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Drennan/Keener: John Drennan and Brenda Keener, Mount Joy, Pa., Aug. 28 at Mount Joy Mennonite Church.

Eigsti/Miller: Janice Eigsti, Goshen, Ind., and Brian Miller, Goshen, Aug. 14 at Willow Springs Mennonite Church, Tiskilwa, Ill.

Gall/Miller: Bethany Gall, Elizabethtown, Pa., and Scott Miller, Mount Joy, Pa., Sept. 25 at Reist Meadow, Mount Joy.

Helmuth/See: Paul Helmuth, Harrisonburg, Va., and April See, Broadway, Va., Sept. 18 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Hughes/Hylton: David Hughes, Harrisonburg, Va., and Amanda Hylton, Harrisonburg, Oct. 2 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Maust/Sensabaugh: Adam Maust, Keezletown, Va., and Sarah Sensabaugh, Harrisonburg, Sept. 25 at Emmanuel Episcopal, Virginia Beach, Va.

Morris/Myers: Travis Morris, Souderton, Pa., and Heather Myers, Telford, Pa., Sept. 25 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

DEATHS

Beiler, Orpha Joy, 50, Kinzers, Pa., died Oct. 9 of lymphoma. Parents: Aaron and Naomi Beiler. Funeral: Oct. 12 at Mine Road Amish Mennonite Church, Kinzers.

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Bender, Goldie J. Miller, 84, Kalona, Iowa, died Sept. 7. Spouse: Delmar Bender. Parents: Joel and Barbara Miller. Children: John David, Alice Golden, Virginia Rew, Leslie, Laura; five grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 9 at West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

Bontrager, Edna Miller, 79, Mio, Mich., died Sept. 9 of Alzheimer's disease. Spouse: Warren Bontrager. Parents: Calvin and Emma Weaver Miller. Children: Beverly Meuti, Wyman, Warren, Wesley, Gordon; 12 grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 13 at Fairview (Mich.) Mennonite Church.

Derstine, Norman A., 87, Towamencin Township, Pa., died Sept. 23. Spouse: Lizzie Nyce Derstine. Parents: Henry and Katie Alderfer Derstine. Children: Elizabeth Frederick, Mary Ann Cassel, Kathleen Harris, James, John (deceased); eight grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 27 in the chapel at Dock Community, Towamencin.

Dirks, Eva Dick, 89, Hesston, Kan., died Aug. 19. Spouse: Johnny Dirks. Parents: Klaas and Anna Wiens Dick. Children: Joy Ann Imel, LaVerle Schrag; five grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 23 at Schowalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Freyenberger, Mildred, 82, Wayland, Iowa, died Aug. 22. Spouse: Robert Freyenberger. Parents: Homer and Jennie Carr Kephart. Children: Ron, Kathy Kennel, June, Steve; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 26 at Eicher Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Friesen, Vaughn Ledford, 88, Huron, S.D., died Oct. 9. Spouse: Frank E. Friesen (deceased). Parents: Barton J. and Iva Gilmore Ledford. Child: Dale (deceased); five grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 13 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Neb.

Good, Kathryn Brunk, 94, Harrisonburg, Va., died Oct. 7. Spouse: Kenneth G. Good (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Hannah Lahman Brunk. Children: Nolan, Edwin, Betty Shenk; seven grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 11 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Good, Ruth Shelly, 88, Harrisonburg, Va., died Aug. 21. Spouse: Wilmer S. Good (deceased). Parents: Henry and Mary Horst Shelly. Children: Charles R., James M., Velma A. Campbell, Shirley C. Shank, Ruby G. Turner; eight grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; six step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 29 in Strite Auditorium of Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, Harrisonburg.

Haarer, Charles C., 88, Morgantown, Ind., died Oct. 10. Spouse: Gladys Haarer. Parents: John and Edna Haarer. Children: Stanley, Ronald, Gerald, Charles Jr., Esther Cirilo, Rachel Roberts, Lois Thomas, Mark, Janet Prawat; 30 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 15 at Bond-Mitchell Funeral Home, Nashville, Ind.

Heatwole, Roland D., 90, Harrisonburg, Va., died Sept. 24. Spouse: Evelyn Shank Heatwole (deceased). Parents: John E. and Mary Hartman Heatwole. Children: David E., Jerry L., Marilyn D. Davis; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 26 at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Kintner, Harold B., 86, Archbold, Ohio, died Oct. 8. Spouse: Ada Leininger King Kintner. Parents: Charles and Lulu Kintner. Children: Ida M. Romero, Anne Cerda; seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 12 at Fairlawn Haven Chapel, Archbold.

Kolb, Elmer G., 99, Souderton, Pa., died Aug. 10. Spouse: Emily A. Moyer Kolb (deceased). Parents: John and Anna Good Kolb. Children: Shirley Lutz, Ruth Graybill, John, David; 14 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 14 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Kramer, Melvin, 80, Chenoa, Ill., died Sept. 29 of Parkinson's disease. Spouse: Shirley Noe Kramer. Parents: Fred and Charlotte Brady Kramer. Children: Deborah Caldwell, Daniel; three grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 2 at Meadows Mennonite Church, Chenoa.

Lambright, Weldon D., 54, Shipshewana, Ind., died Oct. 7 following an accident. Spouse: Mary Davidhizer Lambright. Parents: Harold and Ruth Miller Lambright. Children: Stephanie Roth, Cindy Martin, Cecelia Nuzum; two grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 12 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana.

Leaman, Anna N., 95, Lititz, Pa., died Oct. 5. Spouse: Tobias D. Leaman (deceased). Parents: Witmer and Ella Esbenshade Barge. Children: Robert B., John B., Elnora L. Frank, Dorothy L. Jantzi, Anna B. Kennel; 12 grandchildren; 28 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 11 at Mellinger Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Ours, M. Reba Batterman, 83, Harrisonburg, Va., died Oct. 13. Spouse: Charles E. Ours (deceased). Parents: David W. and Ida Myers Batterman. Children: Allen, Charlotte Swope, Phyllis Knicely; eight grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Oct. 16 at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Pamer, Margaret A., 78, Sarasota, Fla., died Sept. 27 of leukemia. Spouse: Laurence Pamer (deceased). Parents: Ben and Sadie Beachy. Children: Peggy Plavnicky, Jana Mills, Laurence; three grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 29 at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Peters, Mary, 89, Altona, Man., died Sept. 30. Spouse: Cornelius W. Peters (deceased). Parents: John David and Margaret Wiebe Friesen. Children: Edith Friesen, John, Clifford, Bruce, Joanne Baskin; 14 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 5 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Rupe, Doris A. Wade, 87, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 27. Spouse: Lloyd O. Rupe (deceased). Parents: Clark and Mary Conrad Wade. Children: Nancy Rupe-Cressy, John C., Daniel W.; foster children Elfi O'Brien, Ulrich Eggert; two grandchildren; 10 foster grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 1 at Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Shank, Araminta Lehman, 85, Lititz, Pa., died Sept. 14. Spouse: Lester C. Shank. Parents: Joseph and Esther Lehman. Children: Norman, Esther Bucher, Mary Swartz, Miriam Cruz, Ruthi Blackman; 11 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 17 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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Western Mennonite School board of directors and the executive director have announced an applicant search for the ***academic principal*** position. Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students both local and at a distance. Located on 45 acres in the Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience with a comprehensive vision for expanding enrollment, program and facilities. The application deadline is Dec. 15. Position begins July 1, 2005. For information call 866-343-9378 or email wmsoffice@teleport.com.

Eastern Mennonite University announces faculty openings beginning Fall 2005.

Computer science/computer information systems: Full-time continuing faculty position in computer science/computer information systems. Ph.D. or Ph.D. candidacy in CS or CIS required; master's degree in CS or CIS with related doctorate also acceptable. Teaching assignment includes introductory to advanced level courses in computer science and computer information systems (12 hours per semester).

English: Full-time, continuing position in composition and rhetoric. Ph.D. required, with preference for candidates with secondary expertise in English language or early American literature. The new faculty member will provide leadership for EMU's cross-curricular writing initiative, coordinate writing assistance in the academic support center and teach classes in composition, grammar and literature for a total of 12 hours each semester.

Marketing: Full-time, continuing faculty position in marketing. Ph.D. in marketing or related field required. Teaching and industry experience preferred. Seeking a candidate with strong background in marketing to teach undergraduate and graduate level courses from introductory to advanced-level concepts in marketing, including consumer behavior and international marketing.

Photographer/digital media: Full-time, continuing faculty position in photography and digital media. M.F.A. required. M.A. in photography with related Ph.D. considered. Seeking a candidate with strong background in photography and digital media to teach entry level through advanced art and communication courses. Familiarity with black and white photography processes, color photography using digital darkroom, Photoshop and the basics of graphic design required.

Theater: Full-time, continuing faculty position in theater. M.F.A. or Ph.D. with university teaching experience required and professional theater experience preferred. Primary responsibilities include teaching theater courses and directing one play per year. Teaching assignment includes introduction to theater and survey history courses in both Western and non-Western theater. The new faculty member will take leadership in further development of an undergraduate theater program that serves students from across the liberal arts curriculum. Applicants must welcome the opportunity to teach and create theater in the context of an Anabaptist-Mennonite university.

World religions: Full-time, continuing faculty position in world religions or related field/anthropology. Requirements include Ph.D. or Ph.D. candidate in religion/anthropology and expertise in cross-cultural and two-thirds world issues. Seeking a candidate with commitment to Anabaptist-Mennonite theological and missiological perspectives, with significant cross-cultural ministry/scholarly experience. Teaching assignment includes the core course in world religions for all Bible and religion majors and other religion/anthropology courses. Must be willing to teach additional Bible and religion courses within the general education curriculum.

Responsibilities for each position also include student advising, university service and ongoing scholarship.

EMU seeks faculty with evidence or promise of teaching excellence in a Christian, liberal arts environment, committed to ongoing scholarship, who are familiar with and supportive of Anabaptist-Mennonite Christian faith practices. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to Marie S. Morris, Vice President and Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or email ugdean@emu.edu. Visit www.emu.edu online. Review begins Nov. 1, 2004. EMU reserves the right to fill the positions at any time or keep the positions open. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity.

The Latin American Anabaptist Seminary (SEMILLA), located in Guatemala City and serving the Mennonite Church of Central America, seeks a ***rector*** to administrate the seminary program. Candidates should be active members of the Mennonite Church, be fluent in Spanish and at least conversational in English, hold at least a master's degree in some aspect of theological studies and have experience in the administration of educational programs. For more information, see the full position description at www.semilla.org.gt, or to apply contact Tony Brun at info@semilla.org.gt.

Mennonite Central Committee is accepting applications for the position of ***MCC Central States executive director.*** The director provides vision and oversight for all MCC programs in Central States. Familiarity with MCC constituency, strong relational administrative skills and cultural competency required. Experience with budgeting, administration, Spanish language skills preferred. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply. Significant travel time within the United States.

Contact Charmayne Brubaker, 717-859-1151, cdb@mcc.org or your nearest MCC office for the full job description. Application review begins immediately. Position available Jan. 1, 2005, or sooner, if possible.

Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro, Va., is seeking a ***lead pastor or co-pastoral couple.*** Springdale is an established rural congregation with a membership of 200 and an average attendance of 165. We are seeking leadership with personal and spiritual maturity and a strong commitment to Mennonite-Anabaptist heritage and faith, with the ability and desire to apply these in personal and congregational life. We will receive applications and inquiries up to Dec. 31, 2004. This position will be available July 2005. For additional information, reply to Search Committee Chair, Richard D. Alderfer, 137 Nottingham Lane, Waynesboro, VA 22980; phone 540-949-4426 or alderfer@ntelos.net

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Pastoral position opening: **Southside Fellowship** has an opening for a ***full-time pastor*** beginning mid-summer 2005. Founded in 1965, meeting in the AMBS chapel, SSF has a strong emphasis on peace and justice, creative worship and congregational involvement. The congregation of 80 members is represented by middle-class professionals working in human services (many of whom have overseas or VS experiences). SSF desires to attract new families. Send resumés and inquiries to Steve Miller, Congregational Chairperson, 57286 DeCamp Blvd., Elkhart, IN 46515. Phone 574-875-0578.

Pleasantview Home Retirement Community, Kalona, Iowa, is seeking an ***administrator/CEO*** for its not-for-profit, stand-alone, CCRC located in southeast Iowa. The ideal candidate will be a dedicated Christian with strong Mennonite beliefs, an active Iowa NHA license, successful management, marketing, development and financial experience in a CCRC. Please send resumé, cover letter and salary expectations before Dec. 1 to Gerald Yoder, 5031 Johnson Iowa Rd. SW, Wellman, IA 52356.

West Clinton Mennonite Church, located in rural northwest Ohio, is seeking an energetic, spiritually motivated, fun-loving individual who is gifted in working with youth and young adults to fill an ***associate pastor*** role. For further information contact Marvin Leatherman at 419-335-2221 or leather@bright.net.

Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks part-time (50 percent) ***missionary support team coach*** to help develop effective missionary support teams through interaction with missionary candidates, missionary support teams, pastors and congregations. Responsibilities also include preparing resources and conducting training events. Applicants should have strong communication skills, both with individuals and in group/congregational settings, and should have previous overseas missions experience (of at least six months). Position begins Dec. 6, 2004. To apply, contact Jeanette Hess at jeanetteh@emm.org or 717 898-2251 by Nov. 9, 2004.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.15 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available.

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by Richard A. Yoder, Calvin W. Redekop, & Vernon E. Jantzi
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Good Books

Don't sweat the big stuff

Joseph Kotva

We are beginning a new monthly column called ACHE (see box below), which will look at issues of health-care ethics. If you have issues you want to see addressed, write Joseph Kotva, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517-1999, or email jkotva@ambs.edu.

A common dictum of modern life is, "Don't sweat the small stuff." The idea is that we should let go of life's many minor inconveniences and focus our energies on larger, more consequential issues. This is often good advice. However, this is also often wrong. Instead of ignoring the small problems, we should often ignore the large ones. The big picture is often so big that focusing on it immobilizes us.

Similar advice occurs through Matthew 25. In the parable of the 10 virgins, the "foolish ones" are so focused on the bridegroom's coming that they fail to do something as basic as bring lamp oil. In the parable of the talents, the man with one talent is so overwhelmed by the enormity of the situation that he fails to use the talent he has. And in the story of the Son of Man separating sheep from goats, those who receive the kingdom are those who attend to the everyday matters of compassion, while those focused on the big picture fail to notice the Lord in their midst.

Likewise, focusing on U.S. health-care reform can incapacitate you. As I talk to people about the Mennonite Church's new health-care access initiative, the most common response is exasperation that the problem is too big to be tackled by such a small church. People say, "There's nothing we can do … the problem is overwhelming."

I say, "Don't sweat the big stuff." Instead of focusing on the 45 million people without insurance, imagine what might be achievable in your own location if the church shows some commitment and creativity. Instead of fixating on the enormity of the problem, let's dream together about what we might do with the resources we have to improve access for our brothers and sisters in the church and our neighbors down the street.

Around the country, people of faith are already doing wonderful things to improve access for those around them. For example, a Mennonite congregation in Harrisonburg, Va., is starting an elder-care endowment. Part of an estate was donated to the congregation and designated for "compassion." The congregation decided to use that gift as seed money to start an endowment to assist low-income seniors with in-home care and other health-care needs. The success of the program depends in part on whether others in the congregation catch a vision in which they also contribute their estates to this endowment.

Also in Harrisonburg, a Christian counseling center has pledged not to turn anyone away for financial reasons. To honor this pledge, the center combines several initiatives, including sliding-scale fees, donations from local congregations for specific individual needs, and counseling services provided by supervised graduate students from nearby Eastern Mennonite University.

Following experiences of families struggling with catastrophic health-care costs in the 1970s and 1980s, a congregation in Goshen, Ind., established a sharing fund to assist members with various needs, including health-insurance premiums, high deductibles and catastrophic medical expenses. Maintaining the fund has been easy: Members give regularly to the fund and always respond quickly if a special appeal is made. The congregation also works with MMA to provide insurance, splitting the premiums three ways among the individual family, the congregation and MMA's sharing fund. The congregation has a history of members purchasing additional MMA products to help MMA provide financial assistance through the sharing fund.

A free clinic started in 1999 by a Catholic church in Goshen became an ecumenical effort. The 18 supporting congregations provide volunteer physicians, nurses, translators, greeters and office staff. Open two nights a week, the clinic provided more than 2,200 patient visits last year, primarily to uninsured Hispanic individuals. Numerous local physicians, laboratories, pharmacies, and X-ray facilities have agreed in principle to form a network of health-care providers who will accept patients without health insurance on a sliding-scale basis.

Instead of becoming overwhelmed by the big picture, these folks, and thousands like them, are working at health-care reform from the bottom up, using resources at hand to provide better access for fellow church members and neighbors. As the peace churches experienced with mental-health reform, victim-offender reconciliation and restorative justice, significant social change often starts with the local and the doable.

The Anabaptist Center for Healthcare Ethics (ACHE) is a collaborative effort of several Mennonite agencies and associations: Mennonite Mutual Aid, Mennonite Health Services, Mennonite Medical Association, Mennonite Nurses Association, and Mennonite Chaplains Association. Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary provides our institutional home.

In sponsoring ACHE, these groups seek to provide a forum for the Anabaptist-related community to wrestle with the morally complex world of modern healthcare and biotechnology.

The acronym ACHE is appropriate for three reasons: First, people often find the acronym amusing and memorable. Second, an ache is a persistent pain or discomfort. The issues with which ACHE is concerned are so important and complex that they cause us persistent discomfort. Third, for all our medical advances and impressive technology, our healthcare system is ill; it aches.—*Joseph Kotva, director*

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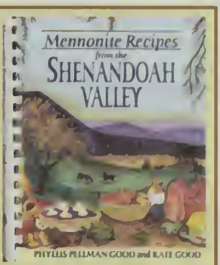

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Everett J. Thomas

James and John as terrorists

Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?—Luke 9:54b

Had Jesus said yes to this question from James and John, the Samaritan town at whom they were angry would have been destroyed. This would have been terrorism.

The erstwhile Samaritan village in Luke 9 provoked the wrath of James and John because the villagers refused to host Jesus. Since hospitality was very important in this Ancient Near Eastern culture, to refuse a traveler was a direct insult. The Samaritans refused Jesus—and insulted him—"because his face was set toward Jerusalem."

Samaritans were descendants of the children of Israel, but they believed that Yahweh's home was in Samaria, not Jerusalem. They would have gladly welcomed Jesus into their homes if his face had not been set toward their enemies. Because of political and theological differences we barely understand today, James and John were prepared to unleash consuming fire on their spiritual cousins. These two men—pillars of the early New Testament church—were prepared to terrorize their enemies because of this insult. But Jesus "rebuked" them.

Terror and terrorism is the issue that the Peace and Justice Network asks us to consider this year on Nov. 7, designated as Peace Sunday. The material confronts us about the way we and our society use words like "terrorist" and "terrorism" today.

"When is an act of counter-aggression considered 'resistance' instead of terrorism?" asks the material produced for Mennonite Church USA congregations. "If a dominant power forces its political and economic agenda upon a people and they fight back, is counter-violence considered 'terrorism' or 'resistance.' It probably depends on who is using the term and whose political and religious ideology the terms are used to support."

James and John would not have considered themselves terrorists because their cause was righteous. Such destruction could be called the "terrorism of the righteous" (the title of the Peace Sunday worship material).

Righteousness (not to be confused with "self-righteousness") is a good thing. The Bible often commends righteousness and blesses righteousness in us. But sometimes people who want to be righteous are so committed to what is right that they are willing to do violence against those who resist right things.

Darrin W. Belousek made the same point in an article we published last summer.

"Bondage to passion prevents them from seeing the other as one for whom Christ died," he said. "Elevating their respective causes to ultimate value, each sees the life of another ... as a mere means that can be sacrificed to some other end."

Who are the Samaritans today? Many U.S. Christians believe Muslims are the enemy because their faces are set toward Mecca and because they despise us—since our faces are set toward Jesus' history in Jerusalem. Shall we therefore call down consuming fire upon them? No. If we secretly wish for the destruction of those called "terrorists" today, Jesus rebukes us, too.—*ejt*

If we secretly wish for the destruction of those called "terrorists" today, Jesus rebukes us too.

Mennonite Church USA more Democratic?

Over the past month, *The Mennonite* surveyed readers regarding the U.S. presidential election in two ways: through a question on our Web site and through a postcard mailing. The results of the surveys are on pages 5 and 19. These results cannot be used to describe the preferences of Mennonite Church USA members. They only show the choices of those who participated in either or both exercises.

Nevertheless, we were surprised by the results. We would not have predicted such strong preference for Democrat John Kerry because the last reliable data about Mennonite voting preferences was from the 1988 election, when most Mennonites voted for Republican candidate George H.W. Bush (See "Where Kerry or Bush May Lead Us," Oct. 5). So here's some speculation: Members of Mennonite Church USA are more closely aligned to the positions and candidate of the Democratic party than were General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church members in 1988. New research is required to confirm whether this shift has occurred.—*Editors*

The Mennonite

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November 16, 2004

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a spork in the road

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Beyond our limitedness—part 2

Karl McKinney, former co-pastor at Reba Place of Rogers Park in Chicago, now works for Mennonite Mission Network.

Son of man, can these bones become living people again? "O Sovereign Lord," I replied, "you alone know the answer to that."—Ezekiel 37:3 (NLT)

God asked one man whether a valley of dry bones could live again. Ezekiel knew the limits and wisely deferred to his inquirer.

The acceptance of our limitedness can lead to eternal life through faith in Jesus. Yet receiving eternal life demands the deferral of one's expectation, identity and devotion to the One who alone knows whether dry bones can live again.

We do not have to defer to him. We can choose to base our lives upon what we see now. At age 75, Malcolm Muggeridge confessed a journalism career devoted to ignoring the facts in order to sell dramatizations of events. "In moments of humility," he writes, "I realize that if I had been correspondent in the Holy Land at the time of our Lord's ministry, I should almost certainly have spent my time knocking about with the entourage of Pontius Pilate, finding out what the Sanhedrin was up to and lurking around Herod's court. ... Ironically enough, as the dramatization of the public scene gains impetus, so we move farther and farther from the reality of things and become more and more preoccupied with fantasy" (*The End of Christendom*, Eerdmans, 1980).

An idea has captured Mennonite culture that children should not be discipled as you do adults. People believe children have the luxury to defer a decision to follow Jesus until they are adults, a time when Jesus said they should become like children.

Some adults taught me I could do anything if I put my mind to it. They wanted to encourage me in a culture designed to destroy any desire to achieve and contribute what might be stirring in my little head. I am grateful for their efforts born of love.

Yet my training primarily was a huge dose of reality, thanks to my parents' refusal to fill my head with lies that obscured the truth of being "black," though gifted, in these United States of America.

I knew quite a bit about my limitedness. I knew I depended on God for everything, including safety from domestic terror. Consequently I understood that if I was going to survive, to thrive in this country, I had to work harder than my white colleagues. I cannot count the number of times I heard that growing up. Being limited by race was a negative my parents taught me to transform into a positive through diligence, treating others better than they treated me and living in private as though under inspection by a horde.

Limitedness is the inability of human beings to live the life we suspect we should live. We are not only limited by race and race-ism but by our ungodliness, which generates injustice, lust, violence, greed and murder.

The doom of Western civilization lies in its exchange of what is real for what is a lie: its pursuit of inordinate gain above sharing and its jettison of truth telling through advertising.

In exchanging what is real and true for lies, we express an unwillingness to accept our limitedness. Our imaginations, desires, passions, lusts and demands determine our way of life. We transform our social order into a marketplace of false solutions with expensive price tags. We are not doomed because we are limited; we are doomed because we have decided to "eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." When we should call upon the Lord, we instead indulge in things that perish.

I teach my children to face the reality of life through submission to the promises of God. There is no other hopeful way to go through life except with growing confidence in the promises of God. Start depending upon him as a child. The promises of God are too vast and fulfilling to neglect. The limitedness of creation is too certain to put one's confidence in mankind. TM

TheMennonite

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. —*Editors*

Pastoring is the greatest job

I affirm everything Ryan Ahlgrim said in "Show Them How to Live," Oct. 19). After 30 years of pastoral ministry in three congregations, my only regret is that I was forced to leave pastoral ministry early due to a bulky voice (adductive spastic dysphonia). I still long to serve the God I revere and the church I respect and love.—*Harvey Chupp, Shipshewana, Ind.*

I commend Ryan Ahlgrim for his honest and self-disclosing thoughts on pastoral ministry. I am a pastor at the North Main Street Mennonite Church in Nappanee, Ind. I like what I do. I like the congregation I serve. When questioned about being a pastor, my standard answer is, "There is nothing I'd rather do or any place I'd rather do it."

There is a growing deficit in Mennonite Church USA between empty pulpits and pastors to fill them. I urge young people to consider the pastorate. I urge congregations to give a higher priority to naming and giving exercise to leadership gifts in our youth, to be positive and confident about the possibility of God calling a young person into ministry. Leadership needs will continue to go begging unless the church is serious about supporting those with the abilities for ministry and the call to it. As did Ahlgrim, it behooves us pastors to tell our stories, finding occasion to celebrate and relate our experiences in ministry.—*Ruben Chupp, Nappanee, Ind.*

War crimes by peacemakers

Reading the thoughtful reflection by Michael King, ("War Crimes by Warriors and Peacemakers," Oct. 19), I couldn't help but recall some of my own past verbal assaults on those who disagreed with me. I also fear that it might be tempting for readers to conclude that both Michael and "Sam" would have been better off if they had simply avoided a conversation about Iraq altogether. But as with physical confrontations, we need an alternative to either fight or flight in our verbal jousting. I offer the following guidelines to keep us engaged in dialogue with those with whom we profoundly disagree:

First, there is no substitute for respectful listening. I use the question, "Tell me what experiences in your life led you to take the position you now hold?" when confronted with a perspective radically different from my own. I ask this question when in dialogue with individuals who differed with me on both abortion and war, and I consistently found their responses illuminating. I may still profoundly disagree with their position, but I often found myself deeply respectful of the life experiences that led them to that conclusion.

Second, we can learn to become more effective at principled advocacy—addressing the issues that concern us with respect as well as passion. The classic advice to be "hard on issues and soft on people" works particularly well when in dialogue with people with whom we disagree. Our opponents are not enemies we must either convert or eliminate. They are, rather, friends and neighbors we can engage (however vigorously) in a spirit of respect.

The current culture of debate in this country has produced stunningly toxic levels of public discourse, as illustrated by the recent presidential election. Sadly, that toxicity has infected many of our churches as well. The answer, however, is neither to imitate our public role models nor to flee in disgust from their verbal violence. Rather, the church needs to model a third way of respectful dialogue that creates a safe space for members to engage critical issues in the spirit of Christ.—*David Brubaker, Dayton, Va.*

Bias and spin in *The Mennonite*

I expect bias and spin when I listen to the nightly news. I don't expect it in our church publications: there is an anti-Israel slant to articles on the problems in the Middle East. I appreciate the complexities of the issues, as I have friends doing a church plant in Israel. I'm sure there are things happening that I am not aware of, but I'd love to read an article about how Christian Peacemaker Teams is working with Hamas and Hezbollah to stop the suicide bombings. I pray for the cessation of wars and the suffering that accompanies them, but even more I pray they come to know the true Prince of Peace from whom comes the shalom we all long for.—*Michael Lechlitner Pastor Goshen, Ind.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Youth and young adult stories are woven through this issue. Young adults struggle with conflicts between faith and culture in their annual meeting (page 19). Jeremy Garber (page 12) describes a friend's confrontation with a fast-food restaurant security guard—considering such interaction a "spork in the road." Dave Stutzman (page 21) works with military personnel in Germany who discover they are conscientiously opposed to war. Perhaps the most compelling story is what happened to Solomon Abebe as a young adult (page 11). Solomon was befriended by Mennonite missionaries in Somalia who led him to Christ and, eventually, to Mennonite colleges in the United States. Now an associate professor at Taylor University in Upland, Ind., Abebe counsels international students there. His story illustrates another theme in this issue: Missions Month. Mennonite Church USA marks November as the time to reflect on stories like Abebe's. It is time for missional hands (page 17) to pick missional apples (page 32).—*Editors*

What the oral church can teach

I wanted to shout "Hallelujah" after reading the articles. "What the Oral Church Can Teach Us" and "Christ's Healing Power to Every Hurting Heart" in the Oct. 19 issue. It has been the dream of many of us who have been involved in mission to Africa that someday they would be coming here as missionaries. Now this is happening. Praise God! My husband, Rudy, and I served with Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission in Congo in the 1950s and '70s. *—Elvina Martens, Elkhart, Ind.*

Academics under the lordship of Jesus

I was favorably impressed with Everett J. Thomas' editorial about picking presidents for Mennonite colleges ("Picking Presidents," Sept. 7). Therefore, I took note of the response from C. Norman Kraus (Readers Say, Oct. 5). Is it not true that academic excellence, left to itself, has the inherent tendency to reduce things to the size of the human mind? Such a mindset may find it difficult to accept the miracles of the Bible.

For individuals or institutions to resist the temptation to bow the knee to intellectual idolatry is not necessarily a mark of inferior scholarship. It may be an honest effort to give recognition to the authority of the Word and the lordship of Christ.

"Full assurance of understanding and acknowledgment of the mystery" are ideally complementary and apparently basic to "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:2,3).

To be authentically Christian we need to give priority to the Word rather than what is academically respectable. What begins and ends in man does not have the potential of meeting the basic human need of reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ. *—David L. Miller, Partridge, Kan.*

Anabaptists in America

The arguments against a two-kingdom theology as proposed by Ted Grimsrud ("Anabaptist Faith and American Democracy," Oct. 5) are flawed and inconsistent with both the teachings of Jesus as well as with our Anabaptist tradition. Jesus repeatedly refused to become embroiled in a political debate with both his disciples and the contemporary religious leaders regarding the oppressive Roman empire. Rather, he ushered in a new kingdom "not of this world."

Our Anabaptist fathers understood a fundamental dualism of a two-kingdom theology that placed Christian values in sharp contrast to the values of the "world." The Schleitheim Confession of 1527 in both the third and fourth articles addresses this dualism and speaks of two kinds of peoples—the church and the world. The ethic of those called unto God is in direct contrast to the ethic of unbelievers.

The concern of the early Anabaptists was not to "heal the nations," as Grimsrud contends, but was one of inner focus on the community of faith remaining faithful in the midst of an evil world. The message of peace for the Anabaptists to the world was not one of bringing about changes among nations but one of promoting the peace of the gospel. The historic teaching of nonresistance to evil was central to the peace stand.

The contemporary term "pacifism" has a much more secular flavor and is not necessarily associated with the gospel imperative. God's plan for the church is not necessarily the same as his plan for the nations. Our mission as believers is to do the work of the church in promoting the gospel of peace.*—Lawrence H. Umble, Richland, Pa.*

Kerry not pacifist

Why were so many "pacifist" Mennonites willing to endorse Kerry as commander-in-chief of the U.S. military. He has stated on national TV that he intends to "hunt down the terrorists and kill them." He also declares he will do nothing to make illegal the willful killing of thousands of innocent children (unborn) in the United States. Kerry can hardly be considered sympathetic with Christ's message of peace, nonviolence and justice for the voiceless. *—David Clymer, Washington*

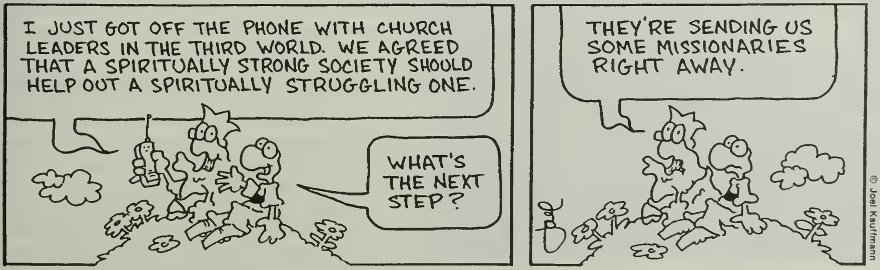
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Being a pastor in a Mennonite church brings:

- ○ More respect than before (30%)
- ○ Less respect than before (38%)
- ○ Not sure (32%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


I JUST GOT OFF THE PHONE WITH CHURCH LEADERS IN THE THIRD WORLD. WE AGREED THAT A SPIRITUALLY STRONG SOCIETY SHOULD HELP OUT A SPIRITUALLY STRUGGLING ONE.
WHAT'S THE NEXT STEP?
THEY'RE SENDING US SOME MISSIONARIES RIGHT AWAY.
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IN BRIEF

Ten lessons from Noah's Ark

From beliefnet.com: Everything I need to know, I learned from Noah's Ark. One: Don't miss the boat. Two: We are all in the same boat. Three: Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark. Four: Stay fit. When you're 60 years old, someone may ask you to do something big. Five: Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done. Six: Build your future on high ground. Seven: For safety's sake, travel in pairs. Eight: Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs. Nine: When you're stressed, float awhile. Ten: Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs, the Titanic by professionals.—*The Christian Century*

Catholic colleges pursue peace

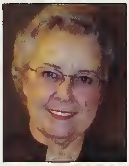
About one-third of the 221 Catholic colleges and universities in the United States have some form of a peace studies program. In response to 9-11 and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, more Catholic schools have established peace programs in order to develop a culture of nonviolence, according to a spokesperson from the Kroc Institute for International Peace at the University of Notre Dame.—*Chicago Tribune*

Mission Network may build new offices

ELKHART, Ind.—Mennonite Mission Network will test whether to build a new Great Lakes office on land available for purchase from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart. Mission Network currently leases two floors of an 81-year-old building in downtown Elkhart, about two miles from AMBS. The seminary board decided at its Oct. 21-23 meetings to invite Mission Network to purchase two acres on the southeast corner of its 33-acre campus, and the Mission Network board commissioned a study to look at funding and other options at its meeting Oct. 23.

If the mission agency moves there, it could continue to share space with Executive Leadership. Mission Network hopes to make a decision by next spring. The proposed move would affect only the Great Lakes office of Mennonite Mission Network; staff distribution among offices in Elkhart and Newton, Kan., and Harrisonburg, Va., is not expected to change.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

EMHS alumni awards Augsburger, Blosser



Esther Augsburger

Glendon Blosser

HARRISONBURG, Va.—The Eastern Mennonite High School (EMHS) Alumni Association announced its recipients of their Alumna of the Year Award and Founders' Lifetime Service Award Oct. 22-24 in Harrisonburg.

Esther Augsburger of Harrisonburg received the Alumna of the Year Award. She has shared her faith through her artwork, which has taken her around the world, as she uses her artistic gifts to reach others. She began the art program at EMHS in 1971 and taught there until 1980. In Washington, she began and taught art classes for inner-city children after school.

Glendon Blosser of Harrisonburg received the Founders' Lifetime Service Award. He served as a pastor, taught Bible classes at EMHS and later was a bishop in Virginia Conference. In Trinidad he trained national leaders under the Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and later served as home mission director of VMBM. In the years he served the church he also farmed.—*EMHS News Service*

Greetings from Goshen to Perú

Goshen (Ind.) College senior Adrianne Mishler, LaGrange, In greets an indigenous porter who helped carry her load as sh hiked the Inca trail during her May class in Perú. Goshen has announced that its new Spanish Study-Service Term locatio Perú and a group will be going there during the summer of 2005.—*Goshen College News Service*

Villagers meet with Israeli occupation official

AT-TUWANI, West Bank—Christian Peacemaker Teams workers were present in At-Tuwani Oct. 31, when village leaders met with an Israeli official who said he is the head of the Israeli Civil (Military) Administration for the southern West Bank. One of the villagers at the hour-long meeting said the official asked the villagers to tell them their needs. The villagers listed concerns about water, a clinic, safe passage to the at-Tuwani primary school for the children of Tuba, electricity, road access to Karmil and improvement of the road to Al-Mufakra and villages to the south.

A village leader told CPT that the visit by such a high-ranking occupation official has never happened before in at-Tuwani. "This meeting didn't just happen. We have had these problems and many attacks by settlers for years, but no one outside knew. Thank you for being here; you have brought us attention."—*CPT*

It takes a village to grow a church in Thailand

SURREY, British Columbia—A couple with eight years of experience in Thailand told mission leaders from Canada and the United States that it takes a village to grow a church.

And also a cow or two. Some fish. Even rice.

Speaking to a gathering of Mennonite Church Canada's Christian Witness Council and the

Mennonite Mission Network board of directors, Pat and Rad Houmphan, Mennonite mission workers in Thailand outlined a long-term approach to reaching a predominantly Buddhist migrant people in Thailand.

Using seed money from North America, the Houmphans have developed rice banks, fish projects and a cow-lending project. In the Living Water Church of Borabur, they lent a mother cow to a member of the congregation, who will raise the cow for three years to generate three calves, keeping two and returning one calf and the mother cow to the church. The calf and the cow are then passed on to two families and the cycle begins again.

Nearly 22 million Isaan people live mostly in villages in 19 provinces in northeastern Thailand. Despite nearly two centuries of mission work by thousands of missionaries, only 1 percent of the population is Christian, and the region has about 1,000 churches.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Dutch Mennonite scholar dies in accident

STRASBOURG, France —A sailing boat accident on Oct. 12 claimed the life of Sjouke Voolstra, 62, an experienced and passionate sailor and Dutch theologian. When Voolstra fell into the water in a storm, his life vest did not work properly and his sailing companion could not reach him in time.

Voolstra had been engaged to write the chapters on Mennonites in Holland for the Europe volume of the Mennonite World Conference Global Mennonite History series. The first volume of the series, on Africa, was released in 2003. The Europe volume is scheduled for release in 2006.

Voolstra is the second Europe volume writer who has met an untimely death. A year ago, Peter Voth, writer of the North Germany segment, died after a heart attack. Voth's successor is James Fehr, a German pastor and historian. Now editors will also need to find a new Dutch writer.—*MWC News Service*

Sanctuary peace churches in Colombia meet

CACHIPAY, Colombia—The church in Colombia has found itself increasingly under attack. Dozens of pastors, priests and lay leaders have been killed; many more have been threatened by all sides, and numerous churches have been closed because of orders from armed groups.

On Sept. 4, unidentified armed men entered the Christian Missionary and Alliance church in Puerto Asis, Putumayo, and opened fire, killing three and wounding 13. A few weeks later, another shooting occurred at a church in Sincelejo.

Within this context Protestant church leaders from all over the country gathered last month at the birthplace of the Colombian Mennonite Church for a conference of Sanctuaries of Peace churches. The Sanctuaries of Peace movement, coordinated by JustaPaz, has three components: to welcome all those affected by the war in the spirit of Christ, to preach a message of peace that is relevant to the situation each church is experiencing and to provide a physical space where anyone may come for prayer or to gather publicly.—*MWC News Service*

Ethiopian begins Mennonite church in Nevada

LAS VEGAS, Nevada—Four years ago, Bogale Tadegagn moved from Washington to Las Vegas to plant what has turned out to be the first Mennonite church of Nevada. His parish? The more than 5,000 Ethiopians who have made their way from California to "Sin City" in the last 10 years—drawn by plentiful jobs in the hospitality industry and a lower cost of living.

In the U.S. capital, the 2,000-member Ethiopian Evangelical Church of Washington serves as a nerve center and key training ground for Ethiopian church planters. That's where Bogale got his vision to plant a church in Las Vegas.

In December 2003, Eastern Mennonite Missions commissioned Bogale as a church planter and began to assist this effort with $1,000 a month. Bogale now works full time to build a self-sustaining Ethiopian congregation in Las Vegas.—*EMM News Service*

MCC photo by Matthew Lester

Bangladesh job program marks 30th anniversary

Shobita Rani Das carries handmade paper at the Shuktara Paper Project in Feni, Bangladesh. Mennonite Central Committee helps provide income-generating opportunities for more than 900 rural women in Bangladesh—work that helps women feed their families, send children to school and have more of a voice in the community. In October, 150 MCC Bangladesh staff, former staff and handicraft project producers celebrated the last 30 years of MCC's job-creation efforts.—*MCC News Service*

IN BRIEF

Choice Books of West Coast appoints director

Choice Books of West Coast has appointed Alfred "Fritz" Peters, a former missionary to Thailand, executive director, starting Nov. 1. CBWC is one of nine regional not-for-profit distributors, working with a central office in Harrisonburg, Va., to "share the good news of Jesus Christ in the general marketplace through inspiring and wholesome reading material." Choice Books is an inter-Anabaptist book evangelism ministry that purchases books from more than 70 Christian publishers and delivers them to more than 7,500 book displays across the continental United States, Hawaii and Puerto Rico. The ministry, which began 42 years ago, now sells more than 4 million books annually.—*Jim Gaede*

'On the wings of a dove' campaign

Churches worldwide will address violence against women and children within the framework of a World Council of Churches campaign, "On the Wings of a Dove." From Nov. 25 to Dec. 10, churches and church-related organizations will promote increased public awareness and attempt to bring justice and healing to those who have suffered or still suffer from violence. Visit www.overcomingviolence.org.—*WCC News Service*

A gringa in Guatemala

A taste of the minority experience

by Julie Hart

In terms of my life as a Christian and work as a professor of sociology and peace studies, the experience of being a minority white living within a dominant Hispanic culture was both difficult and invaluable. Other than my fellow Mennonite Central Committee workers, I was often the only pale face I saw all day. My brown hair and blue eyes stood out in a sea of black hair and brown eyes. My Spanish skills marked me as different. And since our human nature tells us that difference is dangerous and same is safe, in dozens of ways each day, I felt the pain of people distancing themselves from me.

My Spanish skills marked me as different. And since our human nature tells us that difference is dangerous and same is safe, in dozens of ways each day, I felt the pain of people distancing themselves from me.

Don't get me wrong. The vast majority of this distancing was not intentional and was not meant to hurt. It happened, for the most part, below the conscious level just as it does for those of us in the dominant white European culture in the

United States. Because of this, racism, ageism and classism are tough to acknowledge and identify, but they hurt just the same.

One of our best biblical examples of the minority experience is the woman who had been bleeding for 12 years (Luke 8:40-48). She was clearly seen as unclean, impure in the sight of God and inferior due to her perceived sin. Jews of the day sought doggedly to follow the purity laws so they would be acceptable to God, their family and society. The strict purity laws made those who came in contact with the unclean also impure. Thus this woman who tried for 12 years to seek a cure lived daily with discrimination. It would have taken tremendous courage even to approach Jesus in the crowd.

In attempts to understand the minority experience, researchers have documented four daily challenges of minorities in the United States. These typical minority experiences were also my daily challenges in Guatemala and probably also those of the Jewish woman with bleeding.

First, those who are different find it hard to fit in at work. Minorities' life experiences are often different from the majority white Europeans' experiences, just as my history from the United States brought a different worldview and set of expectations. For me, finishing my work took priority. I was diligent and responsible and always had my nose to a book or the computer. But in Guatemala, task completion comes second to relationships—people are number one. Friendships are built by investing time and energy each day in visiting, sharing stories, doing favors and showing affection. Sometime during my second year, friends felt comfortable enough to hint at my peculiarity by saying, "You always seem to be so busy." They learned over time not to include me in some settings because they figured I would rather be working. I wonder how we do this to minorities in our midst whom we sense have different priorities?

Second, minorities in the United States deal with lowered expectations. Because of their perceived differences, we simply don't ask them to do certain tasks. Need a committee member for Christian education? Don't ask the new Hispanic woman who has joined the church; she probably couldn't handle it. Need a new department director? Ask people you know who are competent and trusted. Why take a risk on a new face, especially someone from a different culture? In attempts to adjust to my differences, I was simply omitted from multiple organizational tasks, and it hurt.

Minority friends in the United States have told me that after a day at work in the dominant white culture, all they want to do is be with folks who speak their language and with whom they can relax and be themselves.

Third, we tend to exclude minorities from our "club" affiliations. These could be a lunch bunch, a basketball group, musical gatherings or neighborhood get-togethers. We are not sure how "they" will fit, and when in doubt we go with the familiar. One day, as I was returning to the office just before lunch and ready to join my co-workers for our noontime meal, I found them packed into a car heading out to eat. No one even asked me to join them. What had I done to deserve such blatant exclusion? After some thought, I realized they probably appreciated time to just be Guatemalans and not be constantly attentive to a newcomer.

A fourth characteristic, coping fatigue, the constant need to prove oneself competent and adapt to a foreign culture, tends to wear one out. My first months in Guatemala, I was lucky to stay awake until 8 p.m. My mind, body and spirit were exhausted with speaking and listening in Spanish all day. Even by the end of two years, I could only stay awake until 9 or 10 p.m. because it took so much energy to just get through the day in Spanish and with the constant self-monitoring required to be appropriate in Guatemalan culture.

Minority friends in the United States have told

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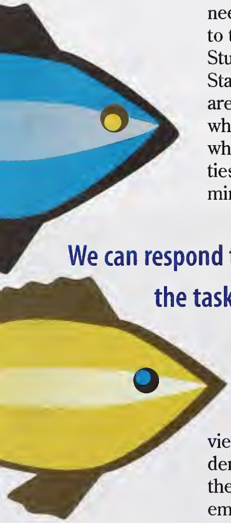
me that after a day at work in the dominant white culture, all they want to do is be with folks who speak their language and with whom they can relax and be themselves. They don't want to join my predominantly white church; they want to worship in a style that is more expressive. Now I understand exactly what they mean. One of my favorite activities in Guatemala was to gather with my North American Mennonite friends for a hymn sing. We often avoided inviting two North American Mennonites who were married to Guatemalans because we knew we would have to work harder to use our Spanish. Exclusion became our sanity and that is how many minorities feel in the United States.

In addition to these common experiences, my husband and I experienced the insult of discrimination firsthand when we realized that in the markets or in taxis, there were different prices for gringos versus the locals. The vendors knew we could pay more and took advantage of this fact. When we needed to make a significant purchase, we learned to take a Guatemalan with us to get a better price. Studies now show that minorities in the United States are quoted higher prices on car sales. They are less likely to be approved for bank loans, even when all of their qualifying data are the same as whites. Real-estate agents are likely to show minorities homes in minority-only neighborhoods. And minorities are less likely to be asked for an interview by a potential employer, even when their credentials are the same as a white person. Imagine the toll this takes on minorities both financially and emotionally.



We can respond to minorities' sense of exclusion through the task of loving—not just being nice or polite or not offending but getting to know and embracing their differences.

The overall experience of being a minority in Guatemala was lonely, humbling and eye opening. I would not have missed it for the world. To have the experience of a minority, even if only for two years, will make me a more sensitive Christian, professor, church member and advocate for work against all forms of prejudice and discrimination. I only wish the experience were available to each of us. Then we might know how to respond as Jesus did to the woman with bleeding who touched his robe in the crowd. When he felt power leave him, Jesus stopped what he was doing, even the important task of attending to someone on the verge of death.

Despite the fact that he was in a position of power and privilege, he sought her out because her reaching out in her own small way was important to him, had changed him. He acknowledged her presence in a way that bucked the culture of the day. Rather than shaming her for touching him due to her unclean status, he turned to her and said, "Take heart, daughter, your faith has healed you." With these words he made her a part of his family and gave her credit for her personal initiative and abilities. He healed her of her isolation, exclusion, humiliation and pain from years of discrimination.

Many people offered Jesus' message of embrace and healing to us in Guatemala. David and Olga invited us into their lives. They not only invited us to their home many times but took us for a long weekend to visit their extended family in El Salvador. David made my husband a part of his musical endeavors at church, and Olga used her elder position and influence to ask me to teach and preach.

Alba and Jorge spoke English and were glad to reach out to us in our language in the early days. They welcomed us to birthday celebrations, family gatherings and parties teeming with jokes and laughter. Alba often acted as a cultural translator, helping us understand what we should do in a particular situation. They reminded us of the humor of our language errors but also trusted us enough to share their personal struggles.

We can practice the same healing and embrace by reaching out and connecting with minorities and those who feel excluded in our workplaces, neighborhoods and churches. We can invite them into our lives, committees and administrative positions. We can respond to minorities' sense of exclusion through the task of loving—not just being nice or polite or not offending but getting to know and embracing their differences.

Our lives are full, but this embrace means inviting minorities into our homes and family celebrations. It means finding out what makes them unique in all the world and building them up, just as many church members did for us in Guatemala. It means investing our precious time and sharing our laughter and our tears. It means using our power and privilege as members of the dominant culture to embrace their difference and allow their difference to change us, just as Jesus did.

Julie Hart teaches sociology and peace studies at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and is a member of Shalom Mennonite Church in Newton. A resource for understanding the typical experiences of minorities in the United States, she writes, is Prejudice and Racism *by James M. Jones (McGraw Hill, 1997).*

From peasant farmer to academic administrator

Helped by Mennonite missionaries, Solomon Abebe has come a long way.

by Lakshmi Hanumanthappa

Solomon Abebe could have been a peasant farmer, but instead he is a professor at a major Christian university. He was born in the village of Deder in eastern Ethiopia, near the border with Somalia. His parents made their living off the land, growing corn, wheat and vegetables. They had seven children—five boys and two girls. Like most families in their village, they were desperately poor. In this situation it seemed likely that Solomon would also be a peasant farmer. However, God had other plans for him.

Mennonite missionaries from Pennsylvania changed the direction of his life. The missionaries, who lived near his village, made a great impression on Solomon. They became his friends, and he played with their children. He worked for them in their garden and kitchen, and they supported Solomon and his siblings in their education in mission schools. It was through their influence that he learned English. He converted to Christianity when he was in 10th grade.

After high school, Solomon taught in Deder in elementary and middle schools. However, he had other ambitions. As a child he had been impressed by the doctors and nurses he had seen. To him they symbolized cleanliness. Doctors and nurses wore clean white uniforms, and the nurses wore white shoes and hats. He wanted to be as clean as they seemed and to work in the medical field.

He left Ethiopia in 1976 to attend Hesston (Kan.) College. His education continued until 1987. He obtained a bachelor's degree from Goshen (Ind.) College, a master's degree from Eastern New Mexico University and a doctorate from New Mexico State University.

During this period his career goals changed. He decided his real interest was education. Although his master's is in biology, his doctorate is in education management and development. His major research interest was stress, and his doctoral dissertation deals with teacher stress and its relationship to absenteeism.

After completing his studies, Solomon held positions at several universities as well as in public school administration. Since 2000 he has been associate professor at Taylor University, Upland, Ind., a private Christian university. At Taylor, Solomon is also director of international students. He lives in Indianapolis with Sheila, his wife, and their two sons.

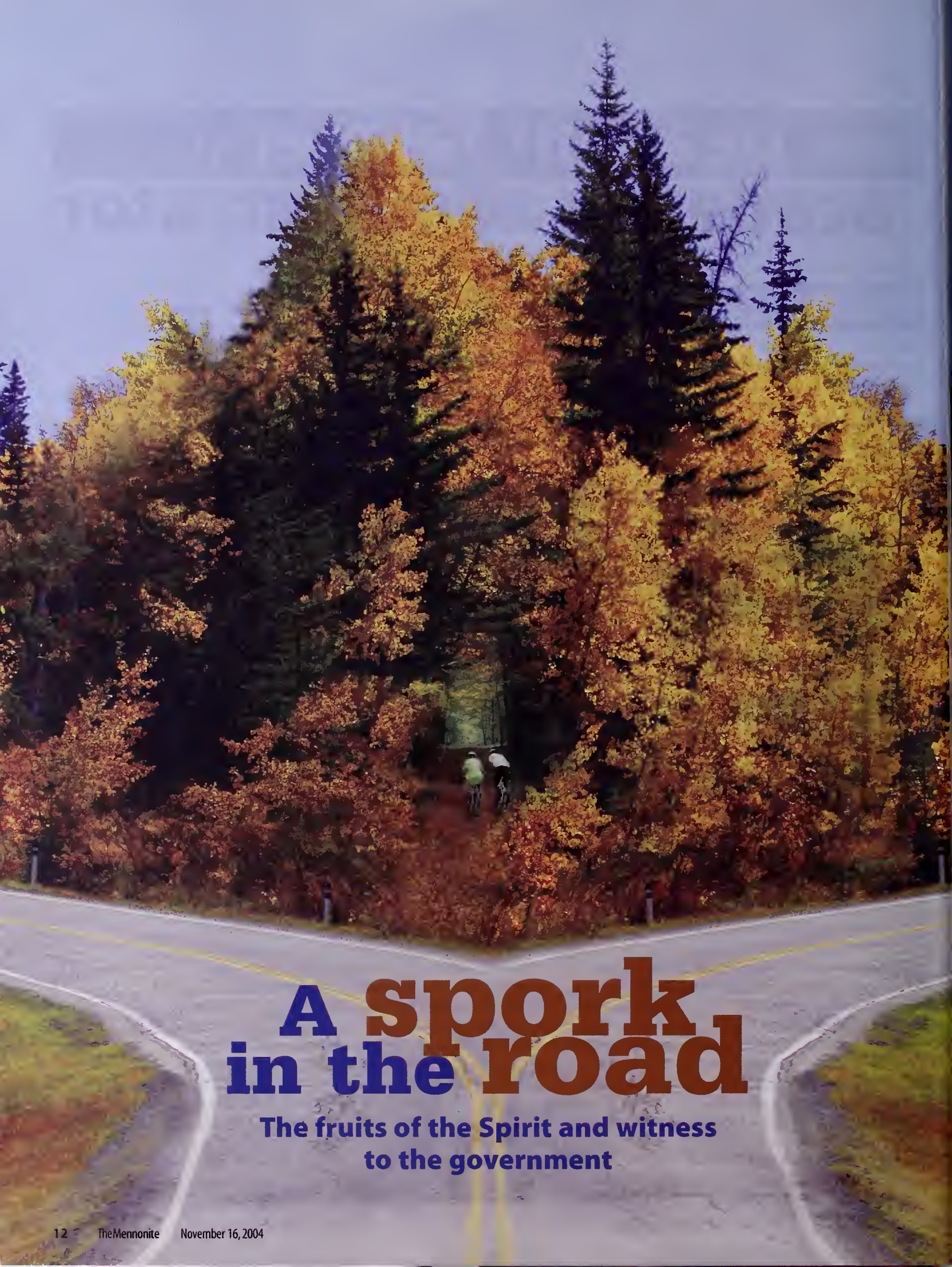
Although the missionaries gave a great boost to his life (he says he was "blessed of the blessed"), Solomon's achievements have not come easily. He has had to work hard at different jobs to pay for his education, even having to clean toilets at one point. As a foreign student in the United States he has also had his share of visa problems. He was afraid to return to Ethiopia to visit his family in case he could not get his visa renewed.

Solomon has **hope** for his corner of Africa and in particular **for education** there.

Since Solomon left Deder the economy there has worsened. Coffee has been the major crop (and a major export of Ethiopia in general). However, its declining price has forced many farmers to abandon coffee production, replacing it with Khat, a narcotic popular in certain areas of East Africa.

Nevertheless, Solomon has hope for his corner of Africa and in particular for education there. His great ambition is to contribute to the improvement of education in Ethiopia.

Lakshmi Hanumanthappa lives in Urbana, Ill.



A spork in the road

The fruits of the Spirit and witness to the government

by Jeremy Garber

the restaurant security guard enjoyed the tools of his power. The fast-food joint where my friends spent much of our college summers had hired someone to keep an eye on the brawling teenagers in the parking lot. We suspected this guard took the job more for the office than to keep the peace. He used his taser on the metal edge of the serving counter and snapped at people for putting their feet on the scuffed plastic tables, just to prove he was in charge and had the weapons to back it up.

When the guard leaned back and put his own feet on the table, my friend Paul decided to keep him accountable to his own standards. Paul went up to the guard and said, "You really shouldn't yell at people to keep their feet off the table and then do it yourself. It sets a poor example."

The guard drew his loaded handgun from his holster and set it on the table. He responded with menace in his voice, "That's why I get to do what I want." We held our breath, waiting for the violence to escalate.

Paul had numerous responses available to him. He could have backed down meekly, bowing to the violent power inherent in the guard's weapon. He could have responded more aggressively, possibly inciting the unstable security guard to inflict physical harm. Instead he chose a path none of us, including the guard, expected. He picked up a plastic "spork" from the countertop and in a mock-menacing voice said, "Well, I have a spork, too." The guard, disarmed by Paul's humor, laughed, put the gun back in his holster and took his feet down off the table. The entire restaurant breathed a sigh of relief, and we bought Paul's meal in celebration of his creative response.

What does a plastic utensil in a fast-food joint have to do with Christian witness? Mennonites witness as "the quiet in the land," exemplifying through nonresistance and charity how to live a Christlike life. Christians often associate the word "witness" with walking up to a stranger in Times Square or the supermarket and asking if they've come to know Jesus. A closer look at some biblical examples, and the life of Jesus himself, shows yet another level of the Christian message: individuals witnessing to governments. When governments go astray, prophets, priests and the church call them back to God's plan of justice and shalom. Why shouldn't we?

Standing up to the state: The book of Exodus plunges into the story of a government gone bad. The new king of Exodus 1:8 sets out to break down the chosen people through overwork and outright murder. In desperation over the success of God's chosen people, Pharaoh even commands two Hebrew midwives to kill every male baby born to the Hebrews. The midwives' response? To specifically disobey the government leader's direct command, because they "feared God" (Exodus 1:21). Shiphrah and Puah's creative yet truthful reply to the king—"These women are so strong their babies just pop right out. What are we going to do?"—highlights their obedience to God's new way of living in obedience.

The guard, disarmed by Paul's humor, laughed, put the gun back in his holster and took his feet down off the table.

The Bible is full of what we now call "civil disobedience"—the refusal to obey governmental laws in order to be obedient to God. King Saul's concubine Rizpah staged an Old Testament "sit-in," fasting and waiting until King David properly buried the bodies of her sons (2 Samuel 21:10). The prophets were well known for their theatrical displays that illustrated the failure of the nation and its rulers to honor God's precepts of justice and mercy (Ezekiel 4, 5, 12; Jeremiah 13, 18, 19, 24). Daniel was even a government official, yet he refused to honor the commands of the king when they conflicted with the commands of God (Daniel 3, 6).

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Both by open challenge and refusal to obey, the faithful people of the Hebrew Bible showed their loyalty to God by disobeying an unjust government.

We as Christians take our commands and example from Jesus Christ. A closer examination of Jesus' life and ministry reveals this same allegiance to God's commands rather than human authority. Jesus miraculously heals a fellow human being in violation of church law (Mark 3:1-5). He plucks grain from a field to feed his disciples (Mark 2:23-27). Jesus even artfully stages a protest peace march into Jerusalem, a reminder of the true King of the Universe, who is a humble servant of peace, not a triumphant conqueror riding in on a warhorse with weapons drawn (Luke 19). For Jesus, proclaiming God's kingdom of healing and salvation trumped the laws of kingdoms—and even the laws of the church. Jesus stood up to the state by standing up for God.

Sporks, sermons and spiritual fruit: Paul's story of the spork, Shiphrah and Puah's response to Pharaoh, and Jesus' triumphal entry are examples of how to confront violence and injustice that go against the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Mennonite Church still hasn't resolved whether calling the government to the standards of the gospel is the right thing to do. However, we have the unique opportunity to live in a nation where many of our leaders openly proclaim their Christian faith—and so make themselves accountable to God's message to the kings and rulers of the world. Scripture's examples of faithful people standing up to an unfaithful state encourage us to do the same.

The church desperately needs to inject its private worship and its public witness with a renewed sense of spiritual play.

Christian witness differs from political demonstration, however. A faithful response to a government that has neglected its God-given task should have the same qualities that are shown in every area of a Christian's life: love, joy and peace. Our concern about our governmental leaders' actions should display the same fruits of the Spirit as our worship, mission and service. Concentrating on these "first fruits" leads us to some surprising, exciting new ways to live the way of Christ. Instead of breaking windows, harassing police officers or insulting those with whom we disagree, faithful 21st-century believers must find creative ways to bring forth fruit in our witness to the government.

As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:13, "Faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love." Our biblical concern for the poor, the orphan and the widow should not blind us to the fact that governmental leaders and military personnel are also beloved children of God. Our witness to the "powers and principalities" must display a genuine concern for the well-being of the other—whether the individual working within the power structure or the structure of government itself. Dominique Barbé, a Roman Catholic, says that protest that portrays the adversary as "beasts and pigs is counterproductive. It incriminates the enemy, but it also unites them. Contempt is tantamount to moral murder" (*A Theology of Conflict and Other Writings on Nonviolence*, Orbis Books, 1989). We cannot bring people to the gospel through hatred or contempt but only by displaying God's love for us and for the world.

The virtue of joy has been low on the Anabaptist totem pole since we were persecuted for standing up for ourselves. Reclaiming this second fruit of the Spirit, along with love for our enemies, challenges us to speak against injustice while calling the fallen powers to come back to Christ's redemption. This requires fun and creativity—and our artists, children and teenagers have much to teach us in this regard. More explicit attention to creative methods of ritual, play and worship must be formed for our Christian witness to display joy. Our collective worship can be transferred to the public sphere: What would a Communion service with Iraqis and soldiers in a public park say about the embracing message of the gospel? The church desperately needs to inject its private worship and its public witness with a renewed sense of spiritual play.

Finally, the church's witness to the government should be grounded in just that—Christian witness. Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary professor Ted Koontz has counseled Mennonites to "speak their first language"—the language of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Using the world's language of effectiveness and social science may be important to communicate, but the language of faith should be our first and ultimate resource. We demonstrate not because peace is a better, more effective way—although it may be. Our witness comes from the fact that God is Sovereign of heaven and earth, of the powers and the thrones. It comes from Christ's teachings to love our enemies and not return evil in kind. It comes from the Holy Spirit, who blows love, freedom and joy through the world in ways we cannot begin to suspect. As we live in times of war, injustice and dissent, may our witness be bold. May we speak what the world needs to hear. But may the fruits of the Spirit blossom in our words. And let love and joy compel us to pick up our spork.

Jeremy Garber is a member of Assembly Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Noah was LEFT BEHIND

The conventional Rapture theory is based on a false premise.

by Ted Lewis

Back in the 1970s a Larry Norman song held a prominent place in my church youth-group songbook: "I Wish We'd All Been Ready." It made you wonder if you were on the right side of things, for the lyrics placed you in the shoes of those who were "left behind" after the Rapture:

"Life was filled with guns and war, and everyone got trampled on the floor.

I wish we'd all been ready.

Children died, the days grew cold, a piece of bread would buy a bag of gold.

I wish we'd all been ready."

The next verse recalls the most poignant Bible image for a Rapture scenario: "Two men walking up a hill, one disappears and one left standing still." The chorus reinforces the haunting tone of the song: "There's no time to change your mind, the Son has come and you've been left behind."

Throughout the centuries, people have thought human history would end within their lifetime, just after an intensification of tribulations. But the idea of believers being rescued out of the world prior to this intensification only dates back to the 1820s and 1830s in Great Britain. This Rapture theory soon merged with the rise of Dispensationalism, a comprehensive system that includes a detailed sequence of end-times events. The Scofield Bible, with its study notes, is known for popularizing this system in the first half of the 20th century.

Throughout the centuries, people have thought human history would end within their lifetime, just after an intensification of tribulations.

Soviet menace: While Larry Norman sang in the 1970s, and people watched "A Thief in the Night" in churches on weekends, the baton of Dispensational thought was carried on by best-selling authors such as Hal Lindsey. The Soviet menace figured big in his predictions. When the Cold War thawed by the end of the 1980s, some thought Lindsey and others would have trouble saving face. But when the Middle East heated up in the 1990s, it seemed prophesy writers lost no wind in their sails.

Currently, Dispensational eschatology (eschaton is Greek for "end times" or "last things") shows no sign of diminishing in popularity. Nothing can compare with the soaring success of the *Left Behind* fictional series, authored by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins. More than 60 million copies have been sold since 1995, and the release of *Glorious Appearing*, the 12th and final book, is again topping Christian bestsellers lists.

The first book in the series describes the Rapture as experienced in a 747 over the Atlantic. When a sizable minority of passengers disappears, leaving clumps of clothing behind, it throws the remaining people into a panic. One can only imagine the sorry fate of passengers in planes where both pilots were true believers.

Those left behind whose loved ones had been devout Christians could put two and two together and make their own choice for salvation. God had their rapt attention. Others had the benefit of videos left in churches (made by believing pastors) that explained what just happened and what would happen over the next seven years.

This prophetic blueprint, based on a literal, sequential interpretation of Revelation, mobilizes an underground Tribulation Force of new believers who fight against the ominous power of the Antichrist and his united world order. One irony is that the heroics of these protagonists have the effect of inviting some read-

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ers to think, "I'd almost rather stay in the Tribulation if I could do espionage work for God's side."

Given the books' vicarious excitement, one senses a divergence from the mood of Norman's song. Even so, most people left behind do not turn to God and suffer the fate of ever-intensifying judgments that parallel the scenes of "guns and war." Moreover, new believers undergo persecutions and martyrdoms that are anything but desirable, cementing the idea that nobody in their right mind would want to be left behind.

If a teenager isn't invited on a class ski trip, he or she may feel left out. But there's an assumption here. Being left is undesirable if being taken is seen as positive. But what if it's the other way around? What if being taken away was the negative thing? Wouldn't you then prefer to be left behind? If the bad apples are thrown away, aren't the good ones left behind for making apple pie?

False premise: The conventional Rapture theory is based on a false premise. If you look closely at the passages in Matthew 24 and Luke 17, from which this phrase comes, the prior reference is to Noah's flood. Those not ready for the unexpected coming are taken or swept away. Noah and his family are left behind. The Genesis story even echoes the word "left" (7:23). Salvation reunites Noah's family with a redeemed creation.

This fits well with the general imagery of judgment as having a cleansing or purging dynamic. The wind blows the chaff away, the crucible burns the dross away; the good grain and refined silver remain behind. So it is with the apocalyptic master-servant parables. When the master returns, the wicked servant is the one taken away (Matthew 24), and the good servants are the ones who remain and receive blessing (Luke 12).

> We are called to remain steadfast through any tribulation; to be watchful and vigilant during such times means that we live according to Jesus' new ways.

There are more clues. After Jesus describes how one person will be taken and one left, the disciples (in Luke 17) ask, "Where, Lord?" Jesus replies, "Where the body is, there the eagles (or vultures) gather." I'd rather not go to where I might end up as a carrion meal. Similarly, in Matthew's sheep and goat parable (25), it is the unrighteous who must "depart" and "go away."

There's more. In the ancient near eastern desert culture, the prospect of being taken from a bed or from a field or away from a grinding mill could feel threatening. One felt vulnerable to bandits or robbers. That is why the Matthew account follows up with, "Watch therefore." In fact, the following verse mentions a thief that comes at night; if you don't want your possessions to be "taken away," then you guard your house with watchfulness.

Now Jesus may return like a thief in the night, meaning suddenly and unexpectedly, but that does not mean he'll come as a thief to rob you or take you away. Eventually humanity is to be reconciled with creation, and all things are to be reconciled to God. But first there must be a shaking and a cleansing. Meanwhile, we are called to remain steadfast through any tribulation; to be watchful and vigilant during such times means that we live according to Jesus' new ways. We are asked to model the future ahead of time.

Why are the *Left Behind* books so popular? Aside from the telling fact that the Antichrist sets up his New Babylon headquarters near Baghdad (and I'll spare you the details of traditional conspiracy-theory linkages between the United Nations, socialism, Jews, Catholics and World Bankers), it has to do with control.

My library catalogs these books as Science Fiction. SciFi literature often makes social control a central theme. In the wake of the winless, exhausting culture wars of the 1990s, conservative Christians have wrestled with the defining question of our times: Who's really in control of our society?

Evil forces: As these books describe an anti-utopian world in the near future, dominated by evil forces, many Christians will see this as an intensification of current trends. Knowing that things turn out well in the end, readers who are perplexed about their relation to society will find solace. And did not the writings of Revelation provide similar comfort for Christians at the end of the first century, helping them make sense of their alienation?

But is it really the same? Granted, the first readers of Revelation struggled with their relationship to Roman society. But they were not preoccupied with prophetic timelines or nationalistic sentiments. The real issue for them was, If we are followers of the Lamb, do we have what it takes to practice the ways of the Lamb? The notion of being lifted out of tough times was not on their radar screen; what mattered most was faithfulness, in the face of tribulation, to the end, embodied in the unique, relational ethics of Jesus.

In a second article I will say more about a Lamb-centered eschatology that offers a third way through the polarized terrain of literalistic or spiritualized interpretations. While today's readership may prefer the comfort of a triumphalistic, good-guys-versus-bad-guys eschatology, we would do well to see how the New Testament gives us an upside-down version that not only subverts all other views but invites us to mirror the Lamb in both living and dying.

Ted Lewis attends Church of the Servant King in Eugene, Ore.

The MEDA Store

October 2004 … that all people may experience Christ's love and utilize their abilities to earn a livelihood, provide for families and enrich their communities

LEND A HAND

Are you looking for a different way to help poor people? A way that respects their dignity by treating them as valued clients and customers—not as objects of charity? A way that emphasizes personal accountability, and that is results-oriented? A way that offers poor people a hand up, not a handout?

Then you want to ***Lend a Hand!***

2005 is the International Year of Microcredit. Microcredit is the process of providing small, affordable loans to people in the developing world—people who, because they are poor, are usually not able to get loans from commercial banks in their own countries. A typical loan is $100 to $500.

MEDA has been at the forefront of the microcredit movement for over 30 years. We lend a hand to people like Rahela in Afghanistan. Rahela and her family fled to Iran to escape fighting in her country. While there, she started a bakery, making pastries of various kinds. When she moved back to Afghanistan, she needed a loan to buy a new oven and other materials. Through MEDA's partner in Afghanistan, Women to Women International, she received a loan to start her new business and support her family.

Do you want to lend a hand to people around the world? Then MEDA is for you!

You can lend a hand by "purchasing" shares in projects from the MEDA Store. To do this, simply indicate the number of shares you want to "buy," mark the project name and number on your donation and mail it to (Canada): 302-280 Smith St., Winnipeg, MB R3C 1K2; (U.S.): 1821 Oregon Pike, Suite 201, Lancaster, PA 17601. *You can also "buy" shares online at www.meda.org or by calling 1-800-665-7026. All "purchases" from the MEDA Store are tax receiptable.*

The "purchase" of shares is a symbolic way for you to participate in MEDA's efforts to help people in low income countries find hope, opportunity and economic well-being through a business-oriented approach to development.

"MEDA's centrally held philosophy is that of action rather than words … that of setting a quiet example of what their deeply rooted Christian beliefs mean to them … which is expressed in their vision and mandate: '…that all people may experience Christ's love and utilize their abilities to earn a livelihood, provide for their families, and enrich their communities'." ***Comment from a recent evaluation of MEDA by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Canadian government's international development organization.***

HELP NICARAGUAN FARMERS IMPROVE THEIR FARMS AND LIVES

Fernando Gutierrez is one of about 600 Nicaraguan farmers involved in MEDA's PRODUMER program, a project that lends a hand by providing better seeds, technical assistance, business training and by developing stronger links with buyers. Fernando, who grows organic sesame and corn, used his training to develop a homemade organic pesticide to control insects. As a result, he has improved his crop yields and, due to the demand for organic sesame, has been able to increase his income. MEDA wants to lend a hand to 400 more farmers like Fernando. Funds contributed to the project will also be used to provide loans and business training for women, so they can contribute to the family income.

AMOUNT NEEDED: $50,000 U.S./$66,000 Cdn.

The Canadian government provides $7 U.S./$9 Cdn for each dollar contributed. A gift of $50 U.S./$66 Cdn "buys" one share of this project, and results in $400 U.S./$660 Cdn being made available to lend a hand to farmers like Fernando.

Mark your contribution Nicaragua, #45-1.

INCREASE INCOMES IN MEXICO CITY

Adrian Rendon of Mexico City made about 3,000 pesos ($264 U.S.) a month as a computer instructor—not enough to live on. He wanted to start a small business to augment his income, but lacked the knowledge to do it. When he heard about the Micro MEDA Mexico business training program, he decided to take the course; today he runs a small business selling quail eggs, a popular snack in Mexico City. Through the sale of eggs he earns an extra 1,000 pesos ($88 U.S.) per month. The course "helped me avoid many mistakes, and gave me confidence that I could do it," he says. Micro MEDA Mexico wants to expand its program to serve more people like Adrian.

AMOUNT NEEDED: $25,000 U.S./$32,000 Cdn.

The city of Mexico has provided a matching grant of 141,937 pesos ($12,500 U.S./$16,305 Cdn). For each dollar given, the city provides 5.6 pesos (50 cents U.S./65 cents Cdn). A gift of $25 U.S./$32 Cdn results in $37.50 U.S./ $52.80 Cdn being made available to lend a hand to people like Adrian.

Mark your donation Mexico, #45-2.

LIGHT A "SPARK" IN RURAL NICARAGUA

In 1990 MEDA created CHISPA (Spanish for "spark"), the first urban microcredit program for poor people in that country. The idea was to light a spark that would show that poor people in that country were bankable. It worked; now we want to light a spark in rural Nicaragua by setting up a new bank for rural people. But this will be tougher and more risky than our urban banking effort—providing financial services to rural communities in the developing world is extremely challenging due to poor roads, sparse populations and the risky nature of farming itself. That's why commercial banks are reluctant to serve rural poor people in Nicaragua. But MEDA's up for the challenge; by 2009 we want to be serving over 7,000 people.

AMOUNT NEEDED: $60,000 U.S./$79,000 Cdn.

The government of Canada provides $45 U.S./$59 Cdn for each share you "buy" in this project. Each share can be "bought" for a contribution of $60 U.S/ $79 Cdn, and will result in $105 U.S./ $138 Cdn being made available to lend a hand to rural Nicaraguans.

Mark your donation CHISPA, #45-3.

BE PART OF THE PROCESS IN TAJIKISTAN

Tajikistan is one of the poorest of the former Soviet republics. Since the fall of communism, it has been subjected to civil war, droughts and rapidly increasing poverty. But the Ferghana Valley has great potential—it is known for its apricots, pears, apples and grapes. But farmers there make very little income from their hard work—the fruit processing technologies, left over from the Soviet era, are primitive and inefficient. You can lend a hand to help them modernize and update their processing equipment; improve crop strains; get training in modern horticulture techniques; obtain loans; and build better links between producers and processors.

AMOUNT NEEDED: $22,000 U.S./$29,000 Cdn.

The Canadian government provides $12 U.S./$15 Cdn for each dollar contributed. Your gift of $22 U.S./ $29 Cdn "buys" one share of this project and results in $286 U.S./$464 Cdn being made available to lend a hand to fruit growers in Tajikistan.

Mark your donation Tajikistan, #45-4.

MAKE WORK SAFER FOR CHILDREN IN EGYPT

Children should not have to work. But the reality is that many children in the developing world have to contribute to the family income if the family is to survive. Simply banning them from working is not the answer; when legitimate avenues to earn money are eliminated, children are forced to turn to selling drugs or prostitution. MEDA is working with the government of Egypt to find ways to enable children to work safely in small family-run businesses. Our ultimate wish is that children in Egypt not have to work at all. Until then, we want to create safe working conditions for children, protect their interests and provide them with opportunities to receive an education.

AMOUNT NEEDED: $20,000 U.S./$26,000 Cdn.

The Canadian government provides $58 U.S./$75 Cdn for each dollar contributed. Your gift of $20 U.S./ $26 Cdn "buys" one share in this project and results in $1,520 U.S./ $1,976 Cdn being made available to lend a hand to children in Egypt.

Mark your donation Children, #45-5.

MEDA is an association of Christians who want to "connect their faith and work in a r

BUILD SELF ESTEEM AND BUSINESSES THROUGH ASSETS

MEDA's business training programs for low income people in North America do more than provide employment—they also help promote self-esteem and confidence. Said Marguerite Sisson, a business owner and graduate of a business-training program: "I learned more than how to run a business. I learned that I am important. I learned that I am a strong and intelligent person. My son is very proud of me and tells everyone that I own a small business. Being a positive role model for him is more important than anything else. He knows that with hard work, determination, and the right help, anything is possible!" MEDA wants to help more people realize their potential through ASSETS Plus+. This new program, which builds on MEDA's ten years of experience in helping low income people realize their dreams of owning a business, plans to expand to new locations in North America. The program will especially seek to assist underserved populations such as women, people with disabilities, immigrants/refugees and rural populations. It costs $30,000 U.S./$39,000 Cdn to start one new program.

AMOUNT NEEDED:
$30,000 U.S./$39,000 Cdn.

The U.S. government will provide $1 U.S./$1.30 Cdn for each dollar contributed to the project. Your gift of $30 U.S./$39 Cdn will result in $60 U.S./$89.70 Cdn being made available to lend a hand to low income people in North America.

Mark your donation ASSETS #45-6.

MAKE LENDING TO POOR FARMERS LESS RISKY

For millions of poor farmers, life is very hard. They are trapped by low productivity and limited access to markets. What they need is credit, so they can borrow money to buy better seeds or improve their farms. But commercial banks are reluctant to lend money to poor rural people, due to the precarious nature of farming. MEDA wants to make it less risky for commercial banks to serve the poor farmers through Agromonitor, a new computer software program that helps them track the progress of their borrowers' crops—from planting and fertilizing right through to the sale of the crop. A pilot project in Peru has been successful; now MEDA wants to improve it and market it around the world.

AMOUNT NEEDED:
$15,000 U.S./$20,000 Cdn.

The Canadian government will provide 90 cents U.S./$1.20 Cdn for each dollar contributed to this project. A gift of $15 U.S./$20 Cdn "buys" one share in this project and results in $28.50 U.S./$44 Cdn being made available to lend a hand to poor farmers around the world.

Mark your donation Agromonitor, #45-7.

HELP HOMEBOUND WOMEN IN PAKISTAN

When Bilqis was widowed, the young Pakistani woman went back home with her young son to live with her parents. But her parents were unable to support two additional people, so Bilqis had to find work. She earned money by producing embroidered fabric for traditional clothing and selling it to shopkeepers. When she couldn't keep up with the demand for her products, she found other women who could help her make the embroidered fabrics. That gave Bilqis another idea; because these women are confined to their homes, they cannot sell their products in the market. She decided to become an intermediary between the homebound women and the local shopkeepers (who are generally male), to help them sell their products. MEDA wants to help 6,000 homebound women improve their incomes by providing intermediaries like Bilqis, as well helping them improve quality. We also want to help them find new markets in large cities for their products, so they can sell them for higher prices.

AMOUNT NEEDED:
$68,000 U.S./$90,000 Cdn.

The U.S. government provides $2.48 U.S./$3.23 Cdn for each dollar contributed to the project. Your gift of $68 U.S./$90 Cdn "buys" one share in this project and results in $236.64 U.S./$380.70 Cdn being made available to lend a hand to homebound women in Pakistan.

Mark your donation Pakistan, #45-8.

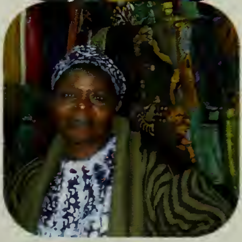
LEND A HAND IN THE BATTLE AGAINST HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS isn't just a health crisis—it's an economic crisis, too. It also affects microcredit institutions that lend to poor people. If clients get HIV/AIDS, they can't work. If they can't work, they can't earn an income, and they can't pay off their loans. If too many clients default on their loans, the bank goes under. A number of MEDA's projects and partners operate in areas that are affected by the HIV/AIDS crisis; funds donated to this project will be used to promote HIV/AIDS education and explore microcredit practices that take into account the effects of this terrible disease.

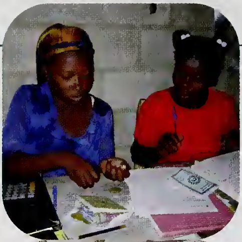
AMOUNT NEEDED:
$60,000 U.S./$78,000 Cdn.

The Canadian government will provide $15 U.S./$19.50 Cdn for each gift of $60 U.S./$78 Cdn given to "buy" a share of this project. This will result in $75 U.S./$97.50 being made available to lend a hand in the battle against HIV/AIDS.

Mark your donation HIV/AIDS #45-9.



world." For more information, call us at 1-800-665-7026 or send an e-mail to meda@meda.org



PROVIDE MICROCREDIT TRAINING IN TANZANIA

His name is Meda. He should be about nine years old now. When he's not going to school, he might be found playing near his mother's small business in the bustling marketplace of Mbeya, Tanzania. It is because of her business that he can enjoy a secure home, adequate food, and a chance to go to school. And it is because of her business that he has a unique name. It all goes back to 1994, when his mother received a small loan and business training from MEDA. When it turned her little business around, she was so happy she decided to name her first child in honor of those who gave her credit. And since it is customary in her culture for a mother to assume the name of her firstborn son, she became known as Mama Meda. MEDA wants to help more people like Mama Meda in Tanzania by using its expertise to train staff at other banks that serve poor people in that country.

AMOUNT NEEDED:
$40,000 U.S./$52,000 Cdn.

The government of Canada and other donors provide $3 U.S./$3.90 Cdn for each dollar contributed to this project. Your gift of $40 U.S./$52 Cdn "buys" one share of this project and results in $160 U.S./$254.80 Cdn being made available to lend a hand to businesspeople like Mama Meda.

Mark your donation Tanzania, #45-10.

LEND A HAND TO FARM FAMILIES IN MOZAMBIQUE

No matter where you live, farming is tough. But it's especially hard in northern Mozambique—the farms are small and access to credit and technical and marketing assistance is limited. Historically, few development agencies have provided any help to people in the area. But now MEDA wants to see if we can lend a hand through a pilot project for families that will offer credit, technical assistance and help with selling produce. The goal is to improve the economic well-being of farmers and their families.

AMOUNT NEEDED:
$56,000 U.S./$75,000 Cdn.

The Canadian government will provide 90 cents U.S./$1.20 Cdn for each dollar contributed to this project. A gift of $56 U.S./$75 Cdn "buys" one share in this project and results in $106.40 U.S./$165 Cdn being made available to lend a hand to farmers in northern Mozambique.

Mark your donation Mozambique, #45-11.

BE A "MOVER AND SHAKER" FOR THE POOR

When many people think of helping poor people, they think of aid—giving charity. Sometimes, poor people do need our charity, especially following natural disasters. But most of the world's poor are working people, and what many need is access to capital—a loan or investment capital to start or grow a business. But finding capital for poor people is hard. Although there is a huge demand for investment and loans, commercial investment firms are reluctant to invest in the developing world. That's where MEDA's Investment Fund Development (IFD) program comes in. Through IFD, MEDA creates financial instruments and investment vehicles that seek out investors and then move large amounts of capital from North America to the developing world. This includes ventures like MicroVest, which has raised $15.4 million U.S./$20 million Cdn of capital for investment in microfinance institutions that serve poor people. By giving to IFD, you can become a "mover and a shaker"—helping MEDA to shake even more money loose and move it to the developing world.

AMOUNT NEEDED:
$100,000 U.S./$129,000 Cdn.

A gift of $100 U.S./$129 Cdn "buys" one share in this project and results in large amounts of capital being made available to lend a hand to poor people around the world.

Mark your donation #45-12.

> Helping people "care for themselves and better themselves is part of a creative process, and I'm not just talking about a creative process in economic terms, but in spiritual terms. This is probably what God wants us to do. We are creating, we are helping Him to create. In that sense I think MEDA has a special calling in this area." ***Damian von Stauffenberg, founder and chief executive of MicroRate, the first rating agency for microfinance institutions.***

PRINTED IN CANADA 10/04

Missional hands

by Stanley W. Green

Hands reach out
Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo imagined
Fingers touch
God felt

Hands stretched out nail-fixed wide
In-between exposed all vulnerable
Hands limp blood drips
Healing splattered hope scattered
Stones feel

Hands in Benin, orphans caressed
Hope gathered, pain soothed
AIDS-wounds Quintanaduenas-hands cleansed
Shame banished healing flows
Bread exchanging hands soup-kitchen line San Francisco
Hunger stilled God felt,
Jesus exposed,
Praise unfolds, hands stretched high

Stanley W. Green is executive director of Mennonite Mission Network.

A call for bivocational or part-time pastors

Diane Zaerr Brenneman is denominational minister for the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board Office of Ministerial Leadership. She welcomes stories, ideas or comments from anyone with experience or interest in bivocational or part-time ministry.

More than half of Mennonite Church USA congregations record their membership at fewer than 100. Once there are fewer than 100 contributors to church spending plans, it is difficult to support a full-time pastor.

Of the 100 pastors registered as Mennonite Church USA pastoral candidates so far this year, only 10 percent report being able or willing to work part-time. We need at least half our pastoral candidates to be open to part-time ministry in order to match all Mennonite Church USA congregations with a gifted, qualified leader ready to equip members in a missionally-driven church. Half the openings in our churches are for part-time pastors.

I face these realities daily with conferences ministers, overseers and bishops in the Mennonite Church USA calling system. That, coupled with working part-time in ministry for the first time in my life, draws me to reflect more on issues of part-time and bivocational ministry.

There are benefits of having two vocations. One has a foot in two worlds. There is a certain authenticity to pastoral ministry when members know the pastor also works is in a world similar to theirs: owning a business, selling real estate, teaching, farming. Knowing their pastor has to be two places helps members have realistic expectations of their pastor. For those of us who struggle to keep good boundaries around the unending possibilities of ministry, having a clock to punch or a business to maintain offers concrete help.

Feeling neither job is getting its due is one challenge of bivocational work. Getting away for theological study and continuing education is difficult for pastors who have second jobs. Financial benefits, particularly health insurance and retirement, are a challenge for pastors who are pro-rated according to time employed by their congregations. But some congregations work out good financial packages for part-time work.

A successful bivocational pastor needs to be organized and pay attention to detail. Supportive family and friends (or spouse) is important. When used judiciously, technology can be essential to keep track of schedule and where to be reached. It can also be entertaining. Once I took a binational conference call on my cell phone while standing in the pasture where my husband was trying to sort calves without me. My colleagues love to make barnyard comparisons to ministry.

For pastors who like fresh challenges, bivocational ministry is a delightful option. In one day I may counsel a pastor in transition, project trends of the future of pastoral ministry, substitute teach third grade, eat lunch with farmers at the local sale barn, operate large farm machinery or study agricultural marketing trends.

In one day I may counsel a pastor in transition, project trends of pastoral ministry, substitute teach third grade, eat lunch with farmers at the local sale barn or operate large farm machinery.

Part-time pastoral work is also attractive without the other vocation. While this is not financially possible for many pastors, some have other sources of income or a working spouse. There is fulfillment in volunteer opportunities when we work part-time, not to mention the increased effectiveness of a pastor who cultivates leisure and good health practices. Jennifer Davis Sensenig, associate pastor at Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church, suggests all pastors live "the good life" to model something attractive in the call to ministry in Mennonite Church USA. She describes the good life as a continual realignment of priorities according to the gospel, coupled with habits informed by our faith. That means pastors can and should do less.

Mennonite Church USA congregations are creating a culture of calling people to pastoral ministry. The young people being mentored reveal a bright future of pastors for our congregations. As demographic and economic pressures shift and change, we will see an increased need for pastors choosing part-time or bivocational work.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Take our moments and our days** —Arthur Paul Boers
- **Waiting**—Laurel Borisenko
- **Lamb-centered eschatology**—Ted Lewis

Young adults confront cultural conflicts

Mennonite Church Canada hosts annual event; participants meet Hutterites.

About 40 young adults from across the United States and Canada came to Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg on Oct. 1-3 to discuss the challenges of community life within church. The annual young adult fellowship event was organized by Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada.

Aiden Schlichting Enns and Miriam Minders, two media-savvy Mennonites, showed clips from a variety of movies and invited discussion about how mainstream culture shapes our concepts of community.

Karen Leis of Saskatchewan helped participants think about what the Bible says about community. Other presenters shared how different messages from mainstream culture and the Bible create tensions about how we should live within community.

"It was really refreshing to spend time with people who are just as concerned with issues the Mennonite Church needs to address as I am," said Jill Swiers, a participant from Minnesota.

The event included a tour of the Starlight Hutterite Colony in rural Manitoba. The tour of this 140-person community included a look at its school and church and information about lifestyle: Who can vote? Only married men. Which members are eligible to become ministers, and what process is used to make the final decision? A name is drawn from a hat, leaving God to decide.

Another weekend highlight included a dialogue about how to best live out community, a readers theater and a foot-washing service.

Thirstborne, a five-member Christian rock band that serves Mennonite Mission Network by encouraging Christian service, performed for the group as part of their tour across North America. They also led the group in worship and stretching exercises, and they shared how constantly traveling together in one van is a good example of living within the tensions of community.

Jennifer Szambecki

Lana Miller, assistant director in Mennonite Church USA's convention planning office, washes the feet of another participant at a young adult gathering held Oct. 1-3 in Winnipeg. The annual event is sponsored by Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada.

As the weekend ended, the binational group of young adults exchanged email addresses and reflected on what they had learned. Many participants felt energized and inspired to bring their renewed understanding of the challenges and opportunities community living presents back to their universities, congregations and homes. *—Jennifer Szambecki, development director for Mennonite Mission Network*

Mennonite seniors focus on hobbies

Mennonite Association of Retired Persons holds fifth retreat at Laurelville.

Ninety seniors came together Oct. 3-5 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center near Mt. Pleasant, Pa., for the fifth Aging with Spirit fall retreat sponsored by Mennonite Association of Retired Persons (MARP).

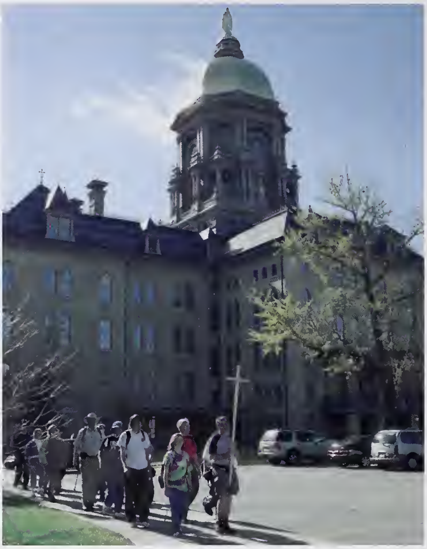
Co-hosts Jep and Joyce Hostetler got the group going with, "Get acquainted and get laughing." Millard Showalter added hilarious readings, and Michael Bishop led spirited singing of old-time favorites. One of the many "places" the group went was on a historical tour of buttons. Grace Hershberger brought along creatively mounted samples from her prize-winning button collection and told fascinating button stories. The group also was introduced to a variety of hobbies displayed around the meetinghouse: photography, painting, ham radio, travel, woodwork, gardening, knitting, weaving, stamp-collecting, egg cups and books.

"Playshops"—rather than workshops—featured Kenton Brubaker's stamp collecting, Michael Bishop's music and Showalter's memory— the entire Joseph story from Genesis 37-50. Jep Hostetler concluded the three days with a presentation on "Humor and Health," convincing the group that laughter is a good place to go, and ensuring there was plenty with a "fertility test."

This Aging with Spirit retreat was especially well attended. One participant said he was attracted by the emphasis on hobbies. Humor and hobbies—just what the doctor ordered.*—Kenton K. Brubaker for Mennonite Association of Retired Persons*

Seminarians remember Marcellus' death

Roman centurion was beheaded for declaring allegiance to Christ in 298.



Mary E. Klassen

Arthur Paul Boers, assistant professor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, carries a wooden cross as a group of pilgrims from AMBS crosses the campus of the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Ind.

Remembering an early Christian martyr who proclaimed he was a soldier of Jesus Christ, a group of seminary students, faculty and friends walked from the campus of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind., to the campus of the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Ind., on Oct. 29 and 30.

The pilgrimage coincided with the anniversary of the death of Marcellus on Oct. 30, 298. He was a Roman centurion beheaded for renouncing his position after declaring his allegiance to Christ.

"For it is not fitting that a Christian, who fights for Christ his Lord, should fight for the armies of this world," Marcellus said at his trial.

The Basilica at Notre Dame, where the pilgrimage ended, holds the relics of Marcellus. The walk was organized with an emphasis on praying and not as a political statement.

"It was not a march," said Arthur Paul Boers, AMBS assistant professor of pastoral theology, "because we were not directly addressing political issues. We were prayerfully walking for peace."

During the walk, the group spent periods of time in silent prayer, answered questions from people they met, sang together and built camaraderie with each other. Whenever they came to a church building on their route—between 15 and 18, according to J. Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president—they stopped to pray for the congregation and pastor. Twenty-four people participated in some part of the walk, most of those traveling the entire distance. The youngest member of the group, 9-year-old Aaron Johnson, son of AMBS campus pastor Janeen Bertsche Johnson, walked the entire 20 miles.

When the walkers arrived at Notre Dame near noon on Saturday, they joined the Catholic Peace Fellowship, another group also commemorating the death of Marcellus. The pilgrimage participants joined CPF for one session of a conference they were conducting, then the two groups worshiped together in the Basilica.

"Singing in that space was a powerful way to end our experience and to know the significance of his [Marcellus'] witness," said Melanie Neufeld, an AMBS student from Winnipeg.—*Mary E. Klassen of AMBS News Service*

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Military counseling network helps COs

German Mennonite peace committee responds to U.S. personnel in Heidelberg.

Conscientious objector" is a term familiar to Christians who refuse to go to war, but it is sometimes a new concept for men and women in uniform who are struggling with a conviction that war is wrong.

The Military Counseling Network, a Mennonite Central Committee partner, provides information on conscientious objection to members of the U.S. armed forces stationed in Germany and deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. More than 100 personnel have contacted the Military Counseling Network since it was formed by the German Mennonite Peace Committee in March 2003. MCN's two staff counselors and a team of volunteers work in Heidelberg, Germany, the military headquarters of some 116,000 U.S. troops. MCC is supporting MCN with $12,000 in grants over two years.

Soldiers contact MCN counselors about the hardships of military service and their stress or family trouble as they face deployment to a war zone. MCN provides emotional support and information on their rights, including the right to apply for a conscientious objection discharge.

"We're often struck by how grateful people are that we're just there (as) somebody that's not part of the Army culture," says Dave Stutzman, an MCN counselor who is supported by Mennonite Mission Network. "What I do is almost more of that emotional, pastoral kind of counseling."

Some men and women in uniform struggle with real pacifist convictions, like one soldier who became convinced it was wrong to fight in Iraq and contacted MCN before his unit was deployed there. Not knowing that conscientious objection was a legal option, the soldier had attempted to injure himself in order to be unfit for duty, says Reuben Miller, MCN's other staff counselor.

"His wife was going to hit him with a hammer," Miller says, "[but] couldn't get up the nerve."

After the soldier contacted MCN for help, the counselor asked if he was a conscientious objector. "Is that what you call it?" the soldier asked. When he learned what it was, he knew he was one.

"They were so glad to find a legitimate way to go about this," Miller says.

He was deployed to Iraq and his superiors denied him any information about his application for a discharge. He wrote a letter to one of his senators asking for help. When word got back to his commanding officer, the officer demanded that he never contact a senator again. The soldier had been informed by MCN that it was his right to contact Congress, and he responded to his commander by saying so. When conscientious objectors are denied discharges, they are often reassigned to noncombatant duties. Whether their applications are accepted or not, MCN continues to support them in their convictions.—*Tim Shenk of Mennonite Central Committee News Service*

Stutzman

His wife was going to hit him with a hammer [but] couldn't get up the nerve.
—Reuben Miller

The Sider Institute's Fourth Annual

Anabaptist Research Paper Competition

The Sider Institute for Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan Studies at Messiah College is sponsoring its fourth annual Anabaptist Research Paper Competition. The paper should address a contemporary or historical Anabaptist-related subject, show evidence of thorough research, and demonstrate original thinking. Disciplinary possibilities include history, theology, sociology, political science, philosophy, literature, women's studies, etc. To be eligible, the paper must have been written by an undergraduate during the 2003–2004 or 2004–2005 academic years. Persons who graduated from college or university in 2004 are eligible to submit papers they wrote as undergraduates. Awards are $500, $300, and $200, respectively, and the submission deadline is January 7, 2005.

For the complete competition guidelines visit www.messiah.edu/siderinstitute (click on "News & Events"), or contact Eric Seibert, The Sider Institute, Messiah College, P.O. Box 4033, One College Avenue, Grantham, Pa. 17027; e-mail: eseibert@messiah.edu.

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Risky business at 2004 MEDA convention

New fund has a 'greater tolerance for risk' in serving the entrepreneurial poor.

While grading papers from students in the Toronto seminary class she taught, Sarah Smith heard God tell her to help women in developing countries by giving them microloans. Consequently, she moved back to her home near Madison, Wis., and bought an empty lot on which to build a house so she could generate some profits for such loans. Along the way she discovered Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) and its microenterprise projects in Nicaragua. On Aug. 4 she broke ground for the house; it will be sold in January 2005. Smith knew nothing about building houses when she started.

Rarely does a dream show up with a complete business plan. —Sarah Smith

"The dreams God gives are ones that make a difference in other people's lives," Smith told the 490 participants at MEDA's annual gathering, Nov. 4-7 in Pittsburgh. "Rarely does a dream show up with a complete business plan."

Smith's story illustrates the theme of the 2004 convention: risky business. Other stories through the weekend demonstrated the many risks MEDA is assuming when investing in poor entrepreneurs. One of the newest such risks is in Afghanistan.

"MEDA is uniquely qualified to help in Afghanistan because MEDA has learned lessons there," said Joyce Lehman, who works out of Kabul to develop a microcredit organization for economically active low-income women. "We have the opportunity to develop an industry in an entire country."

Everett J. Thomas

Crokinole, a board game especially popular in Canada, was a favorite diversion for MEDA convention participants.

Lehman is aware of the personal risk she is taking to live in Afghanistan so soon after the war. But the project is helping MEDA members discover that postwar settings are ripe for the unique skills they have developed after a half-century.

"Microfinance economic development can build bridges in a postconflict environment," said Kim Pityn, MEDA's vice president, who oversees the Afghanistan project.

Risky business is not new for MEDA, but when investments fail, members expect an explanation. Such was the case with some recent investments in Nicaragua and Peru that contributed to a loss of $446,278 in the past year in the Sarona Global Investment Fund (investments that help poor entrepreneurs market garments in Peru and produce black beans in Nicaragua). However, an operating surplus in the rest of MEDA's operations reduced the net loss of assets to $181,093. MEDA ended its fiscal year June 30 with assets totaling $2,875,956.

MEDA staff announced that the Sarona Fund will be moving in two directions. The first part, called MicroVest and currently available only to certificate holder in the United States, "is already a success," said MEDA chief financial office Gerhard Pries, "and is the first North American private equity fund for microfinance." Since October, 40 equity partners have invested an average of $125,000 each. The second fund is the Sarona Risk Capital Fund, which will be powered primarily by $3 million in donations MEDA staff members hope to raise over the next five years. This fund will have "a greater tolerance for risk," said Preis.

The fund is open for additional investors until Dec. 31.—*Everett J. Thomas*

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Anabaptists connect two presidents

Mennonites thank Paraguayan president for not joining U.S. war in Iraq.

Nearly 60 years ago, after World War II, hundreds of Mennonite refugees left Germany for Paraguay. In October, German President Horst Koehler thanked the president of Paraguay that his South American country accepted these homeless people.

Present-day German Mennonites used the occasion to thank the Paraguayan president for resisting American pressure to join the war in Iraq.

The occasion was a dinner at the Charlottenburg castle during an official visit to Germany by President Oscar Nicanor Duarte Frutos of Paraguay and his wife, Maria Gloria Penayo de Duarte Frutos. The president's wife is a member of Iglesia Raíces Hermanos Menonitas, a Mennonite Brethren church (see "President's Family in Anabaptist Church," June 15.)

President Duarte reported that his government is fighting against corruption and is improving the financial, economical and social situations in his country. Both he and President Koehler noted the contribution the German immigrants have made to Paraguay.

The wives of both presidents, on becoming aware of the presence of German Mennonites, came to speak to them. The Funcks were able to tell them of the projects the Mennonites of Germany were supporting in Paraguay, and Maria Gloria reported about her opportunities to support social agencies such as the psychiatric clinic in Asunción, Paraguay—especially concerning the dignity of the patients. Werner and Roswitha Funck served as volunteers at the clinic 22 years ago.

The first ladies introduced the presidents to the Funcks, who gave to the Paraguayan president *In Gods Image: A Global Anabaptist Family*, a book with photos of Mennonites from around the world and English text.

To the German president they presented a copy of *Die Mennoniten in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Mennonites in History and the Present) by D.G Lichdi. President Koehler showed great interest in the book.

The Funcks also had conversations with the other Paraguayan Mennonites present who requested prayer for them and for their country, which is in a time of difficult reconstruction.
—Werner and Roswitha Funck for Mennonite World Conference News Service

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WORKERS

Engle, Jess, was ordained Sept. 19 as lead pastor at Aurora (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Engle, Naomi Epp, was ordained Sept. 19 as associate pastor at Aurora (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Grove, Mary Kauffman, was ordained Oct. 17 at Benton Mennonite Church, Goshen, as chaplain at Greencroft Retirement Community, Goshen.

Juhnke, Roger, was licensed Oct. 3 as youth pastor at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Yoder, Daniel, was licensed Oct. 24 as associate pastor of youth and young adults at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Albrecht, Christian James, July 22, to Richard and Vicki Bowman Albrecht, Waterloo, Ont.

Amstutz, Greta Kristine, Aug. 13, to Lon and Heidi Boschmann Amstutz, Indianapolis.

Amstutz, Hannah Joy, Oct. 9, to Michael and Lisa Headings Amstutz, Dalton, Ohio.

Bishota, Mischa Martina, Aug. 19, to Charles and Misty Waltner Bishota, Wichita, Kan.

Boshart, Hadley Grace, Sept. 28, to Chris and Michelle Walker Boshart, Washington, Iowa.

Dowdy, Benjamin Thomas, Oct. 7, to Daune and Marsha Lantz Dowdy, Archbold, Ohio.

Ediger, Haylie Reagan, Oct. 16, to Luke and Dawn Soloth Ediger, Omaha, Neb.

Friesen, Matthew Jacob, Aug. 15, to Doug and Tina Groff Friesen, Brownstown, Pa.

Harbison, Hailey Renae, Oct, 11, to Jeremy and Julie Miller Harbison, Brighton, Iowa.

Hofer, Maverick Colvin, Oct. 14, to Steven Hofer and Nea Riley, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Ivey, Michael Henry, Oct. 9, to Darren and Dusti Ediger Ivey, Topeka, Kan.

Javornik, Erika, April 23, to Chris Javornik and Linda Weber, Toronto, Ont.

Kern, Kolette Jenay, Sept. 1, to Shaun and Kari Wenger Kern, Goshen, Ind.

King, Elijah Christian, Oct. 7, to Sam and Danelle Weaver King, Indianapolis.

Klassen, Isaac John, July 18, to John and Tracey Peckford Klassen, Cambridge, Ont.

Koke, Peter Jonathan, Sept. 27, to Michael and Sandra Brickell Koke, Winterbourne, Ont.

Koontz, Simon Tanner, Oct. 18, to Nathan and Esther Kratzer Koontz, Mount Eaton, Ohio.

Litwiller, Cianna Allegra, April 5, to Christopher Litwiller and Ellysia Turnbull, Waterloo, Ont.

Nolt, Sarah Genovefa, Oct. 5, to Jeffrey and Ellyn Trout Nolt, Lancaster, Pa.

Rosner, Jonah Luke, Sept. 22, to Kevin and Carmela Martin Rosner, Indianapolis.

Sauder, Micah Jonathan, Oct. 5, to Dean and Doris Burkholder Sauder, Lancaster, Pa.

Sprague, Kaiden Allen, Sept. 4, to Nate and Vicki Mast Sprague, Goshen, Ind.

Sutcliffe, Lucas Jackson, Oct. 14, to Terry and Heather Pfohl Sutcliffe, Guelph, Ont.

Weaver, Hannah Rose, Oct. 7, to Michael Weaver and Chrisandra McCulloh, Christiana, Pa.

Zehr, Darrick Michael, Sept. 7, to Brian and Melissa Merry Zehr, Glenfield, N.Y.

MARRIAGES

Cook/Pellegrini: Colin Cook, Petersburg, Ont., and Jean Pellegrini, Kitchener, Ont., Aug. 28 at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener.

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Diers/Slagel: Jennifer Diers, Fairfield, Iowa, and Matthew Slagel, Wayland, Iowa, Sept. 18 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Felpel/Umble: Rhonda Felpel, Coatesville, Pa., and Brandon Umble, Atglen, Pa., Oct. 10 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen.

Fortna/Yoder: Ryan Fortna, Lebanon, Pa., and Kari Yoder, Akron, Pa., Sept. 25 in Keene, N.Y.

Gascho/McCardell: Jessica Gascho, Lancaster, Pa., and Jay McCardell, Carlisle, Pa., Oct. 16 at Mellinger Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

Hostetter/Kennel: Megan Hostetter, Lancaster, Pa., and Zachary Kennel, New Holland, Pa., Oct. 3 in Lancaster.

Kousky/Martin: Jason Kousky, Marlboro, M.D., and Rose Martin, Elizabethtown, Pa., Sept. 18 at Elizabethtown Mennonite Church.

Kratzer/Zuercher: Angela Kratzer, Dalton, Ohio, and Todd Zuercher, Apple Creek, Ohio, Oct. 2 in an outdoor ceremony in Dalton.

Lehman/Schrock: Sarah Lehman, Leola, Pa., and Ryan Schrock, Kalona, Iowa, Oct. 2 at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Miller/Yoder: Penn Miller, Akron, Pa., and Caryn Yoder, Belleville, Pa., Sept. 25 at Albright Methodist Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Murdoch/Pendoniquott: Lindsay Murdoch, Newmarket, Ont., and Ben Pendoniquott, Newmarket, Aug. 21 in Lakefield, Ont.

Pullman/Schnabel: Joyce Pullman, Freeman, S.D., and Steven Schnabel, Menno, S.D., Feb. 7 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Roggie/Zehr: Buelah Roggie, Croghan, N.Y., and J. Daniel Zehr, Guy's Mills, Pa., Oct. 2 at Croghan Mennonite Church.

DEATHS

Becker, Henry, 94, Marion, S.D., died Oct. 13. Spouse: Hilda Waltner Becker (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Ernestine Pauls Becker. Child: Randy. Funeral: Oct. 16 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Blosser, Lois Grove, 81, Newport News, Va., died Oct. 2. Spouse: Glen Blosser (deceased). Parents: Issac Emmet and Emma Wenger Grove. Children: Nelson, Leroy, Clayton, Max; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 6 at Staunton (Va.) Mennonite Church.

Eash, Edith Alwine, 95, Johnstown, Pa., died Oct. 13. Spouse: Otto Eash (deceased). Parents: Romanus and Catherine Berkey Alwine. Child: David. Foster children: Larry Bush, Alberta Bush, Laverne Bush Kinkaid, Rose Bush, Raymond Bush, Carolyn Bush Burkett; 16 grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 16 at Kaufman Mennonite Church, Davidsville, Pa.

Glanzer, Reva Leder, 79, Freeman, S.D., died Oct. 16. Spouse: Moses Glanzer. Parents: Herman and Ella Graber Leder. Children: Mark, LuAnn, Dorothy, Nancy Fischer; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 20 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Godshall, Lewis, 94, Sellersville, Pa., died Oct. 13. Spouse: Dorothy Moyer Godshall. Parents: Henry and Elizabeth Metz Godshall. Children: Ruth Ann Peddigree, Joel, J. Keith; eight grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 17 at Rockhill Mennonite Community, Sellersville.

Goering, Elva, 91, Newton, Kan., died Oct. 14. Spouse: Dan Goering (deceased). Parents: John B. and Jessie Schrag Goering. Children: Donald, Lola Miller, LaVera Ayers; seven grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 18 at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

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Hershberger, Marie J., 81, Orrville, Ohio, died Sept. 24. Spouse: Roman L. Hershberger (deceased). Children: Debbie Neuenschwander, Maynard, Roman Dale, Gary; 13 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 27 at Wooster (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Hertzler, Warren, 93, Elizabethtown, Pa., died Aug. 18. Spouse: Minnie Leaman Hertzler (deceased). Parents: Frank N. and Fannie Newcomer Hertzler. Children: Melvin, Karl, Everett; 13 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 21 at Elizabethtown Mennonite Church.

Hostetter, Dustin Andrew, 20, Alpine, Wy., died Oct. 7. Parents: Ken and Sharon Hostetter. Funeral: Oct. 13 at Calvary Monument Bible Church, Paradise, Pa.

Hull, Beatrice Rhodes, 96, Westminster, Colo., died Sept. 30. Spouse: Edgar T. Hull (deceased). Parents: Hartwell and Elsie Rhodes. Child: Linda Fish; three grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Oct. 4 at Arvada (Colo.) Mennonite Church.

Kauffman, Clifford (Cliff), 86, Bloomfield, Mont., died Oct. 13. Spouse: Anna Nissley Kauffman. Parents: L.A. and Nettie Sharp Kauffman. Children: Donna Stutzman, Judy Jaques, Roland, Gloria Thiessen, Marjorie Klempel, Sherri Klempel, Jo Rice; 13 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 20 at Red Top Mennonite Church, Bloomfield.

Kintner, Ada Leininger King, 83, Wauseon, Ohio, died Oct. 18. Spouse: (1st) Vernon King (deceased), (2nd) Harold Kintner (deceased). Parents: Ernest and Anna Luthy Leininger. Children: Ida M. Romero, Anna Cerda; seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 21 at West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon.

Klopfenstein, Robert, 67, Smithville, Ohio, died Aug. 2. Spouse: Janet Mumaw Klopfenstein. Children: Deborah Schaaf, Ann Rutt, Wynn, Sharon Noah, Keith, Jayne Cardell; two grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 6 at Smithville Mennonite Church.

Lehman, Grace D., 84, Lititz, Pa., died Sept. 23. Parents: Levi E. and Catherine Brubaker Lehman. Funeral: Sept. 29 at West Bethany Chapel, Landis Homes, Lititz.

Lehmann, Elta Marie Graber, 85, Freeman, S.D., died Oct. 11. Spouse: Henry Lehmann (deceased). Parents: Joe J. and Marie Albrecht Graber. Children: Cheryl, Donavon, Dennis, Bryan, Mary Beth Dick; five grandchildren. Memorial service: Oct. 15 in Freeman.

Loucks, Phares G., 93, Hesston, Kan., died Oct. 18. Spouse: Leah Yoder Loucks (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Clara Bitikofer Loucks. Children: Irene Loucks Schrock, Loren, Stan, Randall; nine grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 23 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Martin, Edna Shenk, 94, Lititz, Pa., died Oct. 18. Spouse: Aaron S. Martin (deceased). Parents: Albert and Mary Fry Shenk. Children: J. Robert, Kenneth E., Rhoda J. Weaver, Edith A. Schnupp; 14 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 21 at Ephrata (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Miller, Henry, 82, Plain City, Ohio, died Oct. 10. Spouse: Anna Mae Kauffman Miller. Parents: Abner and Lizzie Miller. Children: Kathy Rohrer, Diane Miller Ryan, Duane; nine grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 13 at Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City.

Miller, Katie Yoder, 90, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 19. Spouse: (1st) Raymond Stutzman (deceased), (2nd) Mose Schrock (deceased), (3rd) Ora Miller (deceased). Parents: Joe and Katie Schlabach Yoder. Children: Edwin Stutzman, Viola Kaiser, Fern Maust, Eugene Stutzman, Ralph Stutzman, Robert Stutzman; 16 grandchildren; 28 great-grandchildren; 15 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 24 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Miller, Magdalena (Lena), 83, Sarasota, Fla., died Aug. 28 following a stroke. Funeral: Sept. 9 at Sunnyside Village, Sarasota.

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Nofziger, Harold M., 86, Archbold, Ohio, died Oct. 12. Spouse: Mattie M. Nofziger. Parents: Harvey and Mattie Nofziger. Children: Brenda Sensenig, Karen Beck, Rachel Sauder, Norma Jean Sears, James, Mary Kennell, John; 26 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Oct. 16 at Tedrow (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Owens, Violet L., 80, Turbotville, Pa., died Sept. 29. Spouse: Ralph J. Owens, Jr.. Parents: Charles H. and Mabel Weller. Children: Ralph J. III, Robert, Richard, Mabel Brown, Gladys Brown, Ruth King, Doris Sholly, Evelyn Bartholomew; 17 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 4 at Beaver Run Mennonite Church, Watsontown, Pa.

Reimer, Bernhard Harold, 72, Beatrice, Neb., died Oct. 3. Spouse: Alda Epp Reimer. Parents: Bernhard and Gertrude Penner Reimer. Funeral: Oct. 8 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice.

Rohr, Edward, 78, Kitchener, Ont., died Sept. 16. Spouse: Grace Fyfe Rohr. Children: Janice, Marianne. Funeral: Sept. 20 at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener.

Schertz, Mattie Imhoff, 103, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 12. Spouse: Peter H. Schertz (deceased). Parents: John and Bertha Schertz Imhoff. Chilldren: Marjorie Liechty, Ardith Wilson; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 15 at Greencroft Meetinghouse, Goshen.

Shenk, Doris S., 83, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 13. Spouse: Stanley C. Shenk. Parents: Clarence and Elizabeth Alderfer Sell. Children: Dave, Dan, Rhoda Keener, Phil; 13 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Oct. 30 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Smith, Margaret Souter, 58, St. Jacobs, Ont., died Oct. 7 of cancer. Children: Donna Johnson, Cheryl Seddon, Caroline; six grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 12 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

Souder, Marion Ruth, 75, Lewisburg, Pa., died Oct. 20 of cancer. Spouse: Robert N. Souder. Parents: Willard and Mary Ellen Ruth. Children: Barbara Reall, Glenn, James, John; 16 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 23 at Boyer Mennonite Church, Middleburg, Pa.

Sperling, Les, 85, Inman, Kan., died Sept. 1 of heart failure. Spouse: Kathryn Esau Sperling. Parents: C.C. and Anna Schmidt Sperling. Children: Kathy Fagerlund, Leslie A.; two grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 4 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman.

Stutzman, Walter W., 85, Streetsboro, Ohio, died Oct. 23. Spouse: Erdine Miller Stutzman. Parents: Lloyd and Irma Miller Stutzman. Children: Gladys Chittick, Verda Troyer, Marilyn Yoder, Doyle, Arlene Miller, Dorcas, Merla Horst; 20 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 26 at Aurora (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Swartz, Anita Sharp, 92, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 25. Spouse: Orbie J. Swartz (deceased). Parents: Elmer and Clara Kauffman Sharp. Children: Marian Miller, Phyllis Lind, Dee, Merlin, Don; 18 grandchildren; 32 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 28 at Greencroft Meetinghouse, Goshen.

Troyer, Orve John, 85, Milford, Neb., died Sept. 29. Spouse: Arlene Troyer. Parents: Melvin and Mary Saltzman Troyer. Foster children: Steve Kepford, Brian Utter; five foster grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 2 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

Waltner, Alvin, 98, Freeman, S.D., died Sept. 14. Spouse: Lydia A. Miller (deceased). Parents: John L. and Lizzie Waltner. Children: Kathleen Miller, Sharon Duarte, Keith; eight grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Sept. 25 in Freeman.

Wingard, Aldus J., 86, Smithville, Ohio, died Aug. 31. Spouse: Lillie Berg Wingard. Parents: Alonzo and Ella Johns Wingard. Child: Sharon Nissley; three grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 4 at Thomas Mennonite Church, Hollsopple, Pa.

Zehr, Joseph J., 54, Lancaster, Pa., died Aug. 29 of cancer. Spouse: Elma Engle Zehr. Parents: Alvin and Vera Moser Zehr. Children: Tonya Eberly, Devon; two grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 2 at Mellinger Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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Pleasant View Mennonite Church, a rural congregation of 200+ in western Oklahoma (Hydro) seeks a ***full-time youth minister.*** We have 35-40 young people in grades 7-12. Contact the search committee, mimmast@hotmail.com, or call 580-772-7045.

Hamilton (Ont.) Mennonite Church invites applications for a ***full-time pastor.*** This dynamic urban congregation of about 100 members is located in the McMaster University area of Hamilton. We just celebrated our 50th anniversary. We seek a warm, welcoming person with good interpersonal skills. Primary responsibilities are preaching, teaching and overall pastoral care. We would assume that candidates are committed to the values and visions of the Anabaptist Mennonite church.

For more information contact: Muriel Bechtel, MCEC Pastoral Services, 4489 King Street East Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2; phone 519-650-3806; fax 519-650-3947; email muriel@mcec.on.ca.

Freelance designer wanted to design portions of **The Mennonite**. This part-time opportunity begins Feb. 1, 2005. If interested, send resumé and samples to Everett@themennonite.org or mail to The Mennonite, 1700 S. Main Str., Goshen, IN 46256. For more information, call 574-535-6051.

A World of Good Thrift Shop in Harrisonburg, Va., is searching for an ***interim manager,*** January-August, 2005. The position would be suitable for a retired/semiretired couple with MCC Thrift Shop experience. Contact Glendon Blosser, 1513 Mt. Clinton Pike, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, or email GBlosser@aol.com for further information.

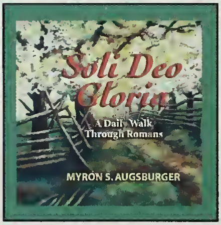
Mennonite Central Committee urgently needs workers in Bangladesh: a ***business consultant*** for one year and ***marketing public relations officer*** for three years. Another immediate need is a couple to participate in a three-year Iran Student Exchange. Visit www.mcc.org/servicetree to find job descriptions. Contact your nearest MCC office or Goldie Kuhns at 717-859-1151 or gpk@mcc.org for an application.

Western Mennonite School board of directors and the executive director have announced an applicant search for the ***academic principal*** position. Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students both local and at a distance. Located on 45 acres in the Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience with a comprehensive vision for expanding enrollment, program and facilities. The application deadline is Dec. 15. Position begins July 1, 2005. For information call 866-343-9378 or email wmsoffice@teleport.com.

The Latin American Anabaptist Seminary (SEMILLA), located in Guatemala City and serving the Mennonite Church of Central America, seeks a ***rector*** to administrate the seminary program. Candidates should be active members of the Mennonite Church, be fluent in Spanish and at least conversational in English, hold at least a master's degree in some aspect of theological studies and have experience in the administration of educational programs. For more information, see the full position description at www.semilla.org.gt, or to apply contact Tony Brun at info@semilla.org.gt.

Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro, Va., is seeking a ***lead pastor or co-pastoral couple.*** Springdale is an established rural congregation with a membership of 200 and an average attendance of 165. We are seeking leadership with personal and spiritual maturity and a strong commitment to Mennonite-Anabaptist heritage and faith, with the ability and desire to apply these in personal and congregational life. We will receive applications and inquiries up to Dec. 31, 2004. This position will be available July 2005. For additional information, reply to Search Committee Chair, Richard D. Alderfer, 137 Nottingham Lane, Waynesboro, VA 22980, phone 540-949-4426 or alderfer@ntelos.net

Just in Time for Christmas



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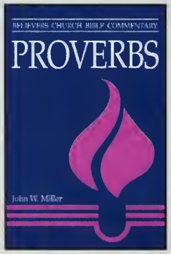

Proverbs: *Believers Church Bible Commentary Series*

John W. Miller's commentary is unique for its detailed uncovering of evidence for two editions of Proverbs, a first in the time of Solomon and a second in support of King Hezekiah's historic religious reforms. In this light heretofore puzzling features of the book's design, purpose and message are clarified and the book's relevance for its time and ours is greatly enhanced.

"Here is solid scholarship. Miller offers helpful pastoral insights for the 21st-century preacher."—*James M. Lapp*

Paper, 400 pages, $24.99; in Canada $34.99

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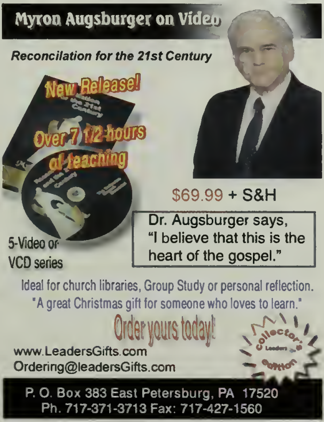
Pastoral position opening: **Southside Fellowship** has an opening for a ***full-time pastor*** beginning mid-summer 2005. Founded in 1965, meeting in the AMBS chapel, SSF has a strong emphasis on peace and justice, creative worship and congregational involvement. The congregation of 80 members is represented by middle-class professionals working in human services (many of whom have overseas or VS experiences). SSF desires to attract new families. Send resumés and inquiries to Steve Miller, Congregational Chairperson, 57286 DeCamp Blvd., Elkhart, IN 46515, phone 574-875-0578.

Pleasantview Home Retirement Community, Kalona, Iowa, is seeking an ***administrator/CEO*** for its not-for-profit, stand-alone, CCRC located in southeast Iowa. The ideal candidate will be a dedicated Christian with strong Mennonite beliefs, an active Iowa NHA license, successful management, marketing, development and financial experience in a CCRC. Please send resumé, cover letter and salary expectations before Dec. 1 to Gerald Yoder, 5031 Johnson Iowa Road SW, Wellman, IA 52356.

West Clinton Mennonite Church, located in rural northwest Ohio, is seeking an energetic, spiritually motivated, fun-loving individual who is gifted in working with youth and young adults to fill an ***associate pastor*** role. For further information contact Marvin Leatherman at 419-335-2221 or leather@bright.net.

Bluffton University invites applications for a ***tenure-track position in business*** beginning fall 2005. Ph.D. or functional equivalent required for tenure. Consideration will be given to candidates from the fields of economics, finance, organization behavior or other management-related disciplines. Masters-level applicants will be expected to enroll in an appropriate doctoral program after one year of employment. Core teaching responsibilities will be in Bluffton University's evening MBA program teaching courses with a quantitative emphasis. Courses in finance, production operations management, economics, information technology and statistics are all possibilities, depending on the particular qualifications of the candidate. MBA courses are delivered as a set of six four-hour evening sessions with extensive out-of-class assignments. A secondary emphasis will be on teaching a limited number of related undergraduate courses. Compensation is commensurate with education and experience within the university pay scale. Review of applications begins Jan. 10, 2005, and continues until an appointment is made. For information see www.bluffton.edu. Send letter of interest, vita, three letters of reference (submitted directly from the referee) and official transcripts to Elaine Suderman, Administrative Assistant for Academic Affairs, Bluffton University, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, OH 45817-2104. EOE. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply.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Gifts that keep on giving

Gordon Houser

Christmas approaches, and we offer a selection of new books, gifts that keep on giving. Here is information about some of the books we have received recently in our office:

Bible: The latest volume in the Believers Church Bible Commentary Series is *Romans* by John E. Toews (Herald Press, 2004, $24.99). This rich commentary approaches Romans from a "new perspective" based on growing research in Pauline studies. Toews sees Paul showing Christianity as "the fulfillment of Judaism, not the annulment of it." He sees Romans as both politically subversive and pastoral. The essays at the end are icing on the cake. This is a valuable tool for any Bible student.

On Jordan's Stormy Banks: Lessons from the Book of Deuteronomy by James E. Brenneman (Herald Press, 2004, $9.99) is not a commentary but a topical study of the Bible's fifth book. Brenneman writes that "Deuteronomy holds many of the levers for understanding the entire biblical corpus." This is an excellent resource for a Sunday school or Bible study group.

Speaking of the biblical corpus, in *How the Bible Came to Be: Exploring the Narrative and Message* (Paulist Press, 2004, $18.95), John W. Miller argues that "a new approach to understanding [the] scriptures is needed, one informed by canon history." This approach "studies the Bible from the standpoint of when and why it was initially compiled." This unique and fascinating book is perhaps for the more serious Bible student.

Spirituality: The two latest volumes in the excellent Traditions of Christian Spirituality Series from Orbis Books are *Following in the Footsteps of Christ: The Anabaptist Tradition* by C. Arnold Snyder ($16) and *Light Through Darkness: The Orthodox Tradition* by John Chryssavgis ($15).

Snyder, who teaches Anabaptist history and has been involved in conversations with Catholics, is a good choice to communicate Anabaptist spirituality to a broader ecumenical audience. He covers the bases well, though it will seem too brief to those of us familiar with the tradition.

Chryssavgis uses paradox ("The vision of God is an encounter of light, but only in an awareness of the reality of darkness.") to help us understand the depth of Eastern Christian spirituality. This is a good introduction that invites more exploration.

Pop culture: This burgeoning field keeps producing more books on the interaction of Christian faith and pop culture. *Finding God at the Movies: 33 Films of Feel Faith* by Catherine M. Barsotti and Robert K. Johnston (Baker Book House, 2004, $14.99) and *Finding Faith at the Movies* by Barbara Mraz (Moorehouse Publishing, 2004, $12.95) will help groups wanting to discuss films from a Christian perspective. The temptation in such books is to find Christian themes where there may not be. But, as Barsotti and Johnston write, "At its core, theology is interactional—a two-way exchange between Scripture and the Christian community on the one hand and culture and human experience on the other." Mraz's book is especially practical, including Scripture passages and even where to find selected scenes in each film.

Bob Dylan is a pop icon. In *Tangled Up in the Bible: Bob Dylan and Scripture* (Continuum, 2004, $16), Michael J. Gilmour explores how Scripture has influenced Dylan's lyrics. This is a scholarly book, but Dylan fans especially will enjoy it.

Science: Another growing field of conversation is between science and religion. Goshen (Ind.) College hosts an annual conference on science and religion. *The Dialogue Between Religion and Science: Challenges and Future Directions* by Antje Jackelén, edited by Carl S. Helrich (Pandora Press, 2004, $16), includes the proceedings of the third such conference. Jackelén's three lectures explores challenges in this dialogue: from hermeneutics, feminist research and postmodernism. The book includes discussion from conference participants.

In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being: Panentheistic Reflections on God's Presence in a Scientific World, edited by Philip Clayton and Arthur Peacocke (Eerdmans, 2004, $35), looks at panentheism—the belief that the world is contained within the Divine, although God is also more than the world—from a variety of scientific and theological perspectives. This can be slow reading, but this doctrine, which is gaining an increasing interest, has multiple applications to theological problems, such as suffering.

Happy reading.

FILMS

Maria Full of Grace (R) tells the gripping story of a 17-year-old Colombian girl (Catalina Sandino Moreno) who agrees to become a drug "mule" in order to help her poverty-stricken family. While the title invites comparisons to the mother of Jesus, the film avoids direct links or preaching. Still, startling images emerge, such as swallowing pellets of heroin like a Eucharistic wafer. The strength of the film is its clear depiction of the lead character, a strong girl who fights for the survival of the baby she carries. First-time actor Moreno is superb.

VIDEOS

Osama (PG-13) is based on a true story about a 12-year-old girl in Afghanistan whose mother has her dress as a boy in order to get work. The brutal Taliban regime has outlawed women from working or leaving their homes without a male escort. Widows are left starving. The frightened girl adopts the name Osama and is taken with other boys by the Taliban to be trained in the Koran. The actors are all amateurs, and the film has a documentary feel. The tension is excruciating, and the situation is heart-breaking. This film will take you to another, horrifying world.

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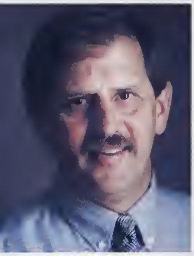

Everett J. Thomas

Seven (missional) apples

Doug and Jen Lehman left a three-acre farm and took their small son to live in a former drug house in a lower-income and multiethnic neighborhood in Chambersburg, Pa. Now they are turning strangers into friends.

"The word 'missional' can be an empty buzzword," Doug says, "But in the end, Jen and I needed to risk being it to make it real" ("A Missional Way of Life," Nov. 2).

Mennonite Church USA discovers what it means to be a missional church by celebrating such efforts. Just as an apple tree is worthless if it does not produce apples, so a missional church identity means nothing if there are no identifiable fruits from that identity. So November—designated as Missions Month in our denomination—is the time to pick some (missional) apples.

Over the past year we published dozens of stories about mission efforts. Many of the articles focused on ongoing work by mission and service agencies, but we mark Mission Month this year by revisiting the personal efforts of some families and individuals. Here are six more stories:

- Keith and Tami Nice hosted a series of events in their Graham, N.C., home—including a backyard Bible school that got washed out by a thunderstorm—to attract friends and neighbors to join them in Christian fellowship. Tami also started a women's Bible study class that introduced young moms to Scripture. Their efforts are supported by Mennonite Mission Network's City on a Hill program (Jan. 20).

Just as an apple tree is worthless if it does not produce apples, a missional church identity means nothing if there is no identifiable fruit from that identity.

- Seven men and five women committed to a year-long program in an inner-city church to learn what it takes to lead a congregation. Josef Berthold, pastor of West End Mennonite Fellowship in Lancaster, Pa., challenged young people to be congregational leaders by immersing them in the life of the neighborhood. The program is sponsored by Eastern Mennonite Missions and is a training program for church planters in Lancaster Mennonite Conference.
- Iowa pastor David Boshart and the West Union Mennonite Church near Iowa City developed a prayer vigil and farm ministry committee after the hog market collapsed in 2000, devastating many nearby farmers. The congregation also planned a hog roast for the community; it has now become an annual event that strengthens their ties with Irish-Catholic neighbors (June 15).
- Two women of faith and close friends, Janet Brenneman and Linda Witmer, spent decades in Guatemala: Brenneman as a teacher and curriculum writer, Witmer with the K'ekchi Mennonite Church, where she trained health workers and started programs such as a co-op for women to sell their weavings (July 6).
- Shirelle Venable, former owner of a nail salon, is a theology student and worked during the summer with girls from a rough neighborhood like the one where she grew up in Harrisburg, Pa. As a Mennonite Central Committee Summer Worker, Venable shared devotionals at nightly meals and tried to "show them that there's more and not settle for what they're in now" (July 20).
- A former Hindu and a former Catholic began a healing and deliverance ministry that turned into a church plant in Virginia. Flinn and Karen Ranchod, originally from South Africa, first joined Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Va., to learn about North American culture. The couple has a unique perspective on the brokenness they find among people in the world's richest country. They say that when people have all the material goods they can buy, it's easier to medicate the pain with creature comforts (Oct. 19).

These are just seven of the many missional fruits borne by our sisters and brothers in countless places around the world. They show that calling ourselves a missional church won't matter until we "risk being it to make it real," as Lehman says. During this mission month, take time to assess how real the missional identity is in our denomination and in your congregation. The more "real" fruit produced, the more trees can grow from the seeds of each missional apple.—*ejt*

The next issue of *The Mennonite* will be dated Dec. 7, 2004

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take our moments and our days

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Beyond our limitedness—part 3

"Lord, help!" they cried in their trouble, and he rescued them from their distress.—Psalm 107:6 (NLT)

Look! I am going to breathe into you and make you live again! I will put flesh and muscles on you and cover you with skin. I will put breath into you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.—Ezekiel 37:5-6 (NLT)

Karl McKinney, former co-pastor at Reba Place of Rogers Park in Chicago, now works for Mennonite Mission Network.

At the moment you realize you are a zombie, helpless and weak perhaps to the point of despair, use your remaining strength and call upon the Lord.

Our ability to seek solutions to our problems means we can pursue sources and solutions other than the Author of life. Western civilizations have pursued life, liberty and happiness at the expense of others' life, liberty and happiness. Consequently, the nations of the West enjoy an especially full and rich lifestyle.

Yet to the degree we have oppressed others we stand to reap despair. In little more than four decades, a soul can find itself lost in the roar of the night, wondering how it got there and how it will make it into the light.

No matter how still a soul stands in its distance from the Author of all things, there is no too far for a soul to wander; there is just a point of limitedness, where perhaps now you will call upon the Lord. Even in the valley of dry bones, our restoration by God is more than probable. No man or woman can place himself or herself outside the reach of the Maker of all things.

The best thing I do any day is call upon the Lord, the One beyond the limitedness we share. In a body and world yearning for a good that has neither source nor supply in the things we see, God gives good and perfect gifts.

Often our quest for help leads us to remedies that further enslave and damage us. Consider the example of the 10 widely used antidepressant drugs that the U.S. government says lead many users into further depression and in many cases suicidal thoughts and behavior (see www.fda.gov/cder/drug/antidepressants/Q&A_antidepressants.htm).

Unlike the woman who suffered from a hemorrhage for 12 years (Luke 8) many today judge it wishful thinking that all they need do to find remedy from God is ask for his help. Pills are preferable to prayer by many who, unlike her, have not experienced exhaustion with human remedies.

Like a pinball in a pinball machine we carry ourselves from one idea to another, from one solution to another, from one remedy to another. In our time, illusions of healing have become the arbiter between life and death. The reason we act surprised when drugs disappoint us and rush to sue drug manufacturers may have to do with the way the failure of human remedies reveals our guilt having misplaced our faith in mankind. Like having been stripped naked, failed cures shame us who knew we should not have "put our trust in man."

We are learning that calling upon the Lord is even preferable to straining to live according to the prevailing standard of living. It is possible to deny the desire for more of everything, in order to learn contentment with little as well as with plenty.

It is difficult to prioritize calling upon the Lord, particularly in a culture that turns human aspirations, longings, lusts and decay into commodities. Literally, "you win some, you lose some." Yet God's followers can live beneath the standard of living in the global economy and enjoy divine health, as did Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

Saved by God, upon whom we call, we can live and in so living testify to the source of all good things for which the human heart longs. May God give us daily experience with him and the courage to speak boldly to our neighbors.

TheMennonite

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Readers' survey

A young college-educated (Eastern Mennonite University) woman asked me in church, "Have you read *The Mennonite* and seen the poll they took? I don't know if I want to be a Mennonite anymore."

I am asking, Is the Mennonite church reaching out to what may be the majority of Mennonites? Take note that the "red states" in the recent election are where most Mennonites are located. How many closet conservatives do we have? I am concerned that unless we address the needs of these Mennonites we will be losing a vital part of our church to the growing independent community churches.—*Velda Rohrer, Orrville, Ohio*

I found the results of the readers presidential poll ("*The Mennonite*'s Readers Go for Kerry," Nov. 2) heartbreaking as well as Rebecca Gaff's Readers Say letter in the same issue. The thinking that lets 59 percent of respondents support a candidate whose positions are in direct opposition to a biblical worldview does not bode well for the future of Anabaptism. Having recently rejoined the Mennonite church after some 20 years, I am troubled to find that the theology is still as skewed as it was when we left.—*John O. Yoder, Manheim, Pa.*

Editor's note: As noted in the article, the readers' survey was not statistically reliable as an indicator of views across Mennonite Church USA; it revealed only the preferences of those who participated in the poll. Approximately 5 percent of readers participated.

Web site poll not fair

The presidential poll on your Web site was seriously flawed. Thousands of Americans could not choose the candidate of their choice as there are at least three major candidates missing and no option for "other." Michael Peroutka of the Constitution Party (my choice), Michael Badnarik of the Libertarian Party and David Cobb of the Green Party were on enough state ballots to have had a mathematical chance of being elected because of electoral votes if the general public knew enough about them to vote for them in the first place. Unfortunately, the media and most polls chose to ignore these candidates and focus only on Democrats and Republicans—and occasionally Ralph Nader. The readers of your Web site should be the one to decide so you would have had a fair and accurate poll.—*Aaron D. Priest, Lee, Maine*

Responding to Gordon Scoville

Thank you for printing the letter from Gordon Scoville (Speaking Out, Nov. 2). I found it perceptive, accurate and prophetic. We must recognize that in the end those in positions of power and wanting a yes vote—on the referendum as Mr. Scoville put it—in this nation were successful in exploiting a narrow definition of "moral values." We must search our hearts for the ways we as individuals, local congregations and a church in this nation also acquiesce to the abuse of power at many levels.

Too often our prophetic voices are muted by our loyalty to church institutions and our fear of losing the support of constituents. I would like to thank the editors of *The Mennonite* for their efforts to continue to nurture a vision of God's kingdom reaching across national boundaries and embracing a global church. I believe that for those of us who voted no on the referendum, the most challenging agenda now is to endeavor to live out the hard sayings of Jesus as we relate to those who voted yes in our communities and congregations.—*Dennis Zehr, Tiskilwa, Ill.*

At the end of Gordon Scoville's open letter to Mennonite Church USA about President Bush's National Security Strategy of preemptive war there was this rather legalistic disclaimer: The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the Board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

That disclaimer raises the question, What exactly is the "official position" of *The Mennonite*, its board and Mennonite Church USA regarding a national defense policy that is obviously inconsistent with the essence of being Mennonite?

Scoville has spoken. Now isn't it time for Mennonite Church USA to declare its official position? Of course, if our church has no official position then disclaimers will be unnecessary in the future as other Mennonites speak out against a

IN THIS ISSUE

This is not only the first issue of the Advent and Christmas seasons, it is also the first issue in the Christian year (which begins with Advent). To mark the beginning of this new year, Arthur Paul Boers explains why Anabaptist leaders are compiling a book of prayers (page 8). Boers notes that many people he counsels do not know how to pray or have stopped praying and says, "Prayer books give us the encouragement of praying with others." Laurel Borisenko, a member of Mennonite Central Committee's team in Burkina Faso, provides an Advent reflection (page 11) and says that too often we try to make Christmas into a pretty Christmas card. She observes that Jesus' family had to flee into Egypt, becoming refugees just like the urban refugee children in Burkina Faso to whom she ministers. "Our Advent reward," she says, "is the baby born into the poor refugee family."—*Editors* national policy that should be unacceptable to all people of Anabaptist persuasion.—*Tom Frank, West Simsbury, Conn.*

Two kingdoms

The New Testament is replete with exhortations to be separate from the world. We must conclude, therefore, that there are two kingdoms, and we live in both: the first by choice and the second by birth. However, Ted Grimsrud does make some strong points in "Anabaptist Faith and American Democracy" (Oct. 5) about the flaws in two-kingdom theology. There are people who have a tendency to interpret separation from the world as isolation. But Jesus said in his prayer to the Father (John 17:18) that as God sent him into the world he sends his followers into the world. He then repeats this directly to his disciples following his resurrection. Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount and scattered throughout the New Testament are a blueprint for how humans should get along. There may be many reasons why some folks don't vote, but it should not be because they are members of God's kingdom and therefore excused from all responsibility for what happens in the other kingdom.—*D. Lowell Nissley, Sarasota, Fla.*

Election reflections

As I heard the U.S. presidential election returns come in, I wept. I wept for this country and the world. When I heard that those who voted for President Bush were voting for "moral values," my sadness turned to anger. "Moral values" is a code for abortion, gay marriage and—for those still angry with Bill Clinton—adultery. Somehow, these three moral issues trump the issues of children in poverty, loss of jobs, loss of health care, children (especially in poverty areas) confronted with schools that have become less effective because of No Child Left Behind, a growing gap between the rich and poor, death from the use of legal assault weapons, destruction of the environment, fracture of our relationship with most other countries in the world and the invasion of a country with its consequent loss of tens of thousands of lives.

I have never been so ashamed to be an American and a person of religion. God does not bless America any more than he blesses any other country. The only thing that gives me hope is the belief that God is more powerful than all this and that somehow something good will come out of it in the end.—*Mary T. Schrock, Goshen, Ind.*

A few observations in the wake of the election: President Bush had a 5 million vote majority in the southern states, meaning that Senator Kerry got 1.5 million more votes than Bush in the rest of the country. The Democratic party may not have committed political suicide when civil rights and voter registration legislation was passed in the 1960s (a Democrat was in the White House, and the party controlled Congress at the time), but its self-inflicted wound was considerable. The country's abortion rate was in a 10-year decline prior to the current administration's coming into power. Reasons cited for a turnaround in that rate are job loss, poor wages and a lack of health coverage. If the war in Iraq, economic policies that favor the richest citizens, a minimum wage that leaves workers below the poverty level, an obscene budget deficit that will become the responsibility of future generations and more than 40 million people without health insurance, many of them children, aren't moral questions, what are they?—*Paul Hershberger, Goshen, Ind.*

Deal with spiritual matters

After reading *The Mennonite* for the last two months, I can only pray that God will still love me even though I voted strictly Libertarian. I pray that we can now return to dealing with spiritual issues rather than political issues. Finally, I pray that we can return to using spiritual truths and Scripture rather than political sound bites and empty promises given by empty men. May God bless us all. —*Tim Troyer, Bloomington, Ind.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

November is missions month. My congregation:

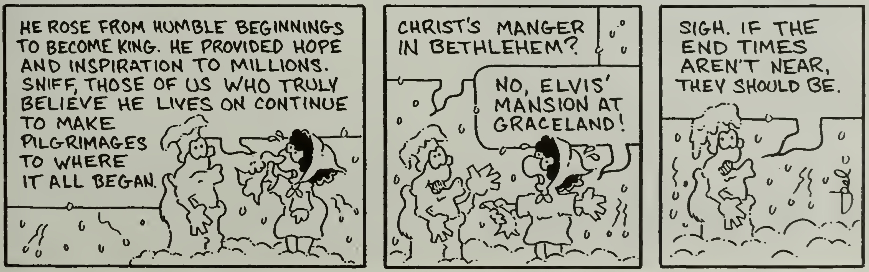
○ encourages new ministries (56%)

○ discourages new ministries (9%)

○ seems indifferent to new ministries (35%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


HE ROSE FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS TO BECOME KING. HE PROVIDED HOPE AND INSPIRATION TO MILLIONS. SNIFF, THOSE OF US WHO TRULY BELIEVE HE LIVES ON CONTINUE TO MAKE PILGRIMAGES TO WHERE IT ALL BEGAN.
CHRIST'S MANGER IN BETHLEHEM?
NO, ELVIS' MANSION AT GRACELAND!
SIGH. IF THE END TIMES AREN'T NEAR, THEY SHOULD BE.

IN BRIEF

'House organ' comes to Bluffton

Bluffton (Ohio) University is installing a pipe organ that was donated by alumnus, Herb Himes, '73, and his family 17 years ago. Himes was involved in many of Bluffton's music ensembles. The organ, custom-built in 1977 for Himes' home in eastern Ohio, is commonly referred to as a "house organ." In 1987, Himes and his family donated the organ to Bluffton, because he was building a new house and decided he no longer needed the organ. Originally installed in the campus chapel, then located in Founders Hall, the organ is now being reinstalled in the Gilliom Room in Mosiman Hall.—*Bluffton University News Service*

The heat is on

Scientists say changes in the earth's climate from human influences are particularly intense in the Arctic region, evidenced by widespread melting of glaciers, thinning sea ice and rising permafrost temperatures. A study released Nov. 8 said the annual average amount of sea ice in the Arctic has decreased by about 8 percent in the past 30 years, resulting in the loss of 386,100 square miles of sea ice—an area bigger than Texas and Arizona combined. To read more, visit www.acia.uaf.edu. *—Associated Press*

Vietnamese Mennonite pastor sentenced

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam—The Ho Chi Minh City People's Court handed down sentences to six Vietnamese Mennonite church workers Nov. 12 in a four-hour trial.

Nguyen Hong Quang

Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang, vice president and general secretary of the Vietnam Mennonite Church, was given three years imprisonment, the most severe sentence, for obstructing officials carrying out their duties. A close associate, evangelist Pham Ngoc Thach, was given a two-year sentence. The others were sentenced to prison from nine to 12 months.

About 200 Christians reportedly came to show their support for Pastor Quang, including many persecuted ethnic minorities from the central highlands. None was allowed into the courtroom, though some were permitted to enter the courtyard area, which was guarded by an estimated 300 well armed police.

Quang's attorney was prepared to argue that Quang and his codefendants were trying to help the authorities maintain law and order and that there were no grounds for charging them with criminal offenses.—*Mennonite World Conference News Service*

Menno Simons helps fight AIDS in Ghana

Members of the Ghana Mennonite Church wearing Menno Simons shirts celebrate their 16th-century history and their 21st-century responsibility by dancing to give an offering for the church's AIDS awareness-raising project during a Nov. 5-7 event held in Amasman.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Catholics honor Mennonites for service work

TAKOMA PARK, Md.—On Nov. 13, Catholic Network of Volunteer Service presented its Father George Mader Award to a group outside the Catholic tradition for the first time in its 15-year history. Mennonite Mission Network accepted the award at the CNVS national conference on behalf of Mennonites in mission across the world, including Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

Mission Network and MCC serve the church in more than 60 countries through direct relief, peacemaking and community development with resources of around $73 million, engaging close to 2,000 personnel committed to terms of one year or more.

The award honors organizations and individuals that encourage Christian men and women to serve others in the United States and abroad. CNVS representatives singled out Mennonite Voluntary Service, a Mission Network program, for special acclaim.

"For six decades, Mennonite Voluntary Service of the Mennonite Mission Network has been a powerful influence serving the poor and marginalized in hundreds of communities throughout North America," said Jim Lindsay, CNVS executive director.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Jim Bishop

Crosses mark deaths from war in Iraq

Under the rubric "Remembering the Cost, Mourning the Violence," 1,000 small white grave markers occupied a portion of the lawn in front of the Campus Center at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., Nov. 8-12. JustVoices, a group of local citizens and students committed to nonviolent action, erected the crosses to remind the campus and larger community of the human cost of war. Danny Malec, a student in EMU's Conflict Transformation Program, says the 1,000 white markers represent the deaths of over 1,000 U.S. soldiers and civilians in Iraq. Each cross, crescent and star also represents around 100 Iraqi citizens (according to the medical journal *The Lancet*) who have died as a result of the Iraq war, he says. *—EMU News Service*

Andean Anabaptists focus on restoration

ISLA MARGARITA, Venezuela—Under the theme "Restaurando en el amor desde el evangelio integral" ("Restoring in love from a holistic gospel"), 85 representatives of 10 Anabaptist conferences or clusters of churches met here Sept. 22-26 for the second Andean Anabaptist Congress.

Participants came from Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador, and fraternal visitors came from Bolivia, Canada and the United States. Delegates from Peru were unable to obtain visas.

Five workshop leaders focused on restoration for individuals, women and family, church, community and society. Women learned about an effort to bring together women theologians in the region. Alix Lozano, director of the Mennonite Biblical Seminary of Colombia, said the project anticipates providing a space for women theologians to support and encourage each other and recognize the significant contribution of women in theological development in the region.—*MWC News Service*

Goshen senior faces cancer with faith, support

Nathan Detweiler

GOSHEN, Ind.—Most college seniors have a lot on their minds: finishing their academic work and thinking about job interviews, service assignment options or graduate school applications. In October, Goshen College senior Nathan Detweiler was one of them—completing an internship as part of his social work program and considering next steps. Now his focus is on what he calls the most significant challenge of his life.

Detweiler has been diagnosed with the advanced stages of rhabdomyosarcoma—a type of soft-tissue cancer affecting muscles, tendons and fatty tissues, more common in children than in young adults—and has returned to his home in Washington, Iowa, for further testing, treatment and to spend time with his family.

While Detweiler is away, campus community members have shown support. Students and faculty gathered for a prayer and healing service for Detweiler. A quilt is circulating as an opportunity for campus members to express their thoughts and prayers to Detweiler. Friends in Iowa are organizing a 24-7 prayer vigil, and members of the campus community have signed up for blocks of time to pray for Detweiler. Goshen's Social Work Department is sending a package to Detweiler every Friday, including items students contribute.—*Goshen College News Service*

Training in Zambia addresses abuse of women

KITWE, Zambia—Domestic abuse is common in Zambia, and incidents of violence are known to be high in police and military camps. Over the summer, Mennonite Central Committee held training in Kitwe on gender and nonviolence for wives of police officers. Through interactive exercises and group work, participants reflected on violence in the community and in their homes. By the second day some participants were brave enough to share their own stories of domestic violence. The trainer agreed to offer a second training if participants brought stories of how they used what they had learned. "The rate of change in their homes will be slow, but their eyes have been opened to new possibilities," says MCC worker DeEtte Wald Beghtol.

MCC responds to floods in Bangladesh

NOAKHALI, Bangladesh—During one week in September, Noakhali received a deluge of more than 53 inches of rain. Ensuing flooding caused a nearly 60-percent failure of the Aman rice crop. This is the largest rice-growing season and the biggest opportunity for landless people to earn money working as laborers in others' fields. The heavy rainfall destroyed vegetable crops and damaged fruit trees. Proceeds from fish cultivation were lost when ponds flooded and fish escaped. In addition, many farmers will not be able to buy seeds to plant this winter or are now eating seeds they had planned to plant. Mennonite Central Committee has sent $25,862 to provide farmers with groundnut seeds and fertilizer.

Courtesy photo

Penn View Christian School dedicates new building

A crowd gathered at Penn View Christian School, Souderton, Pa., Oct. 24 to celebrate the opening of a new facility with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Left to right: Robert Rutt, executive director of Penn View; Ruth Yoder, Penn View board member; Steven Barndt, chair of the Board of Supervisors of Franconia Township; Kenneth Hochstetler, Penn View board chair; and Philip Bergey, Franconia Mennonite Conference executive.—*Penn View Christian School*

IN BRIEF

MMA honors Claude Good

MMA presented Claude Good, a Lansdale, Pa., resident, with a Journey Award Nov. 14, recognizing his fresh approach to stewardship of health. Good demonstrates the difference one individual can make. He decided to eat healthy, economical foods and use the savings to help others. He founded The Worm Project, an international program to treat parasitic worms in people worldwide. He educates and inspires others, especially young people, to do the same.—*MMA News Service*

Monks muzzle 300-year tradition

After more than 300 years of legendary service rescuing travelers in the Swiss Alps, St. Bernard dogs have become too expensive and obsolete to be cared for by the monks at the Great St. Bernard Hospice. With the advent of helicopters and the use of lighter and quicker breeds such as German shepherds and golden retrievers, St. Bernards have lost their favored status at the hospice. The dogs can weigh up to 220 pounds and each consumes more than four pounds of meat per day. —*National Catholic Reporter*

Take our moments

Why Anabaptists are compiling a book of prayers

by Arthur Paul Boers

Why would contemporary Anabaptists compile a book of prayers? In recent years, many new prayer books have been published. Do we need yet another? And why an Anabaptist one? While some Anabaptists centuries ago had prayer books, developing such resources now may seem contrary to our traditions and priorities.

As a student in the 1980s, Rebecca Slough tried to introduce morning and evening prayer at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind., but encountered little interest. I was one of the students who did not participate. A decade ago, Eleanor Kreider suggested that Mennonites need a prayer book. Although she is a well-known missionary and teacher in North America, Europe and Asia and author of two fine books on worship, the time was not ripe.

Then something shifted. In 1999, I received a grant to study Christian traditions of morning and evening prayer and explore what they offer Protestants today. I was surprised when numerous Mennonite pastors, denominational leaders, journalists, scholars and folks in the pew contacted me to report they were using various prayer books in their prayers. Most were unaware of what the others were doing, but all were tapping into a time-honored practice.

Mennonite pastors, denominational leaders, journalists, scholars and folks in the pew were using prayer books in their prayers.

As part of my project, I taught morning and evening prayer at Bloomingdale (Ont.) Mennonite Church, where I was pastor. I was impressed with how helpful and meaningful this practice was for many in the congregation. Eventually I wrote *The Rhythm of God's Grace: Uncovering Morning and Evening Hours of Prayer* (Paraclete, 2003), which explains the history, theology and benefits of this venerable way of praying. The positive response to this book suggests that many others are coming to appreciate such forms of prayer.

Before we were colleagues, AMBS president Nelson Kraybill and I met at a party and discovered we both love morning and evening prayer. When I came to teach at AMBS, we compared notes on this subject and wondered whether the time had come for an Anabaptist prayer book. In September 2003, we called together a score of folks from the United States and Canada: pastors, denominational leaders, scholars, journalists and poets. Nelson and I planned a process to discuss this way of praying. We anticipated vigorous debate. But the group was chafing at the bit to develop an Anabaptist prayer book. Clarity came quickly.

I continue to meet with positive response as I introduce this way of praying, both at the seminary and in the wider church. Regularly I am asked for advice and recommendations about this tradition. And people often wonder whether we should develop an Anabaptist prayer book. It is out of these kinds of experiences that a group of us have drafted a prayer book.

But how do we understand a way of prayer that is unfamiliar to so many?

Finding biblical clues: It may be instructive to count the number of times the Psalms speak of praying in the morning and evening. The Psalmists do not mean to propose that believers limit their praying to those times of day, but praying at certain times fosters being prayerful all the time. Consider the repeated phrase in Genesis 1, "And there was evening and there was morning." With this short-

and our days

hand, the writer denotes not just evening and morning but the passage of the whole day. The Psalmist longs for perpetual prayer: "From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the Lord is to be praised" (Psalm 113:3).

Jesus made a comparable recommendation. Aspects of his parable about the persistent widow may puzzle us, but his point is clear: The parable is about his followers' need "to pray always and not to lose heart" (Luke 18:1b).

The New Testament epistles pick up this theme. Paul urges believers to "rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18a). We are told, "Pray in the Spirit at all times" (Ephesians 6:18a); "Devote yourselves to prayer" (Colossians 4:2a); "Persevere in prayer" (Romans 12:12b).

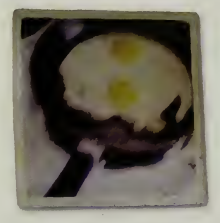
While the priority of constant prayer is clear, how to pray without ceasing is not apparent and has even been a subject of controversy throughout church history.

Praying without ceasing: Most do not understand unceasing prayer to entail spending every moment of every day in intense, intentional conversation with God. Although in extreme cases people have tried to live on prayer alone—without working, eating, sleeping or even going to the bathroom—Christian tradition sensibly rejects such distortions.

Anabaptists are more likely to say, "My work or service is prayer." This approach to unceasing prayer may be better than the extreme ones, but is it enough? In this secular age, many Christians are "functional atheists," and their way of life is indistinguishable from that of their unbelieving neighbors. Some Christians live and work with steady awareness of God, but most of us need help to do so. I know I do. Saying that everything we do is prayer may actually mean that we rarely pray.

Our Sunday giving reminds us that everything we have belongs to God. Offerings make us mindful that all our spending is theological and should be done in a spirit of worship and discernment. Sunday giving does not mean that because all we have belongs to God we do not have to set aside the first fruits. Nor does it mean that the portion we give on Sundays is all that we owe God. In a similar way, morning and evening prayers remind us that all our time belongs to God. God always deserves our thanks, praise and attention.

Morning and evening prayer is not about praying only at those times of day, any more than tithing is about granting God's ownership of merely 10 percent of our money. Morning and evening symbolize all time. They are key daily moments when we set our direction, remember our purpose, review how God is at work and recall where we missed God's priorities. I love the imagery in Psalm 65:8b: "The gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy." Regular, disciplined prayers at particular times encourage us to be prayerful always.



Morning and evening prayers remind us that all our time belongs to God. God always deserves our thanks, praise and attention.

Supporting one another in prayer: Some are so disciplined in prayer that they do not require

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

structure. Perhaps they are the “strong,” as Paul used the term. If this new way of praying displaces faithful disciplines, then one should not impose it. However, if such strong folks see that this prayer helps others, perhaps they might commit to this discipline to support those of us who are “weaker.”

Many have trouble finding time for prayer. Challenges of busyness are among the most pressing spiritual issues people face.

As a writer, teacher and pastor, I often run into people who struggle with prayer. They do not know how or when to pray, what to say, how to start or when they are finished. Many have trouble finding time for prayer. Challenges of busyness are among the most pressing spiritual issues people face.

Whenever I teach this way of praying, people report, “Until now I was not able to pray.” Some had never settled into habits of prayer. Others had experienced a trauma and stopped praying. Prayer books helped these people pray again.

Prayer books give us the encouragement of praying with others. Anabaptists emphasize that we cannot be faithful on our own and cannot even understand the Scriptures by ourselves. We need the body of Christ. Being a Christian is hard work and sometimes feels just plain foolish by the world’s standards. But it is a lot easier when we are supported by others and know we are not alone.

We live in an individualistic culture, but Christian faith calls us to another way. Individualism hurts society and church. Personal preference and wanting our private needs met disrupts and destroys fellowship and disfigures worship. Our bias is to emphasize private and personal prayer, but this priority was not characteristic of Bible times or of the church in its early centuries.

Like all faithful living, praying relies on the help and encouragement of faithful others. Most Christians cannot be hermits. It may seem noble for each person to pray freely, spontaneously, alone, one’s own way, according to one’s inspirations, but for most this approach does not work well. Long ago, as a pastor and teacher of pastors, I learned not to take people’s prayer for granted. Too many people—including pastors—told me they had difficulty praying or even that they did not pray. I became surprised when someone said they did pray regularly.

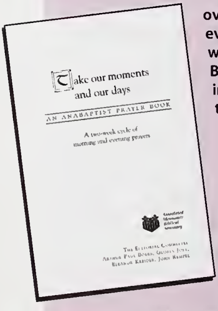
Taking Scripture words to heart: Most of the words in the morning and evening prayers in our new prayer book are Scripture words. The Bible was written for prayer and worship. But more and more of us are less and less familiar with the Bible. We hope this resource will increase that familiarity and even inspire renewed memorization of Scripture. We offer the book in the spirit of 16th-century Anabaptists who published concordances of vital Scripture texts. (Arnold Snyder’s research on the history of 16th-century Anabaptism includes attention to these collections.) We will rejoice if through the use of these prayers more of us come to learn these Bible words by heart.

Our intention is to use Scripture passages especially suited to praying by heart.

Resisting false choices: Spiritual disciplines, especially unfamiliar ones, are easily misunderstood. The approach we offer here is not the only or even the best way for all of us to pray. Many have rich prayer without such a resource. If this style of praying is a hindrance, don’t use it.

We are not advocating a works righteousness of prayer. The goal is not to be holier (or more prayer-

Go to Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary’s Web site (www.ambs.edu) and find the Anapaptist prayer book. Once you’ve downloaded it, you may print it out or view it onscreen. You may also order a printed copy from Pandora Press (www.pandorapress.com).


Take our moments
and our days
AN ANABAPTIST PRAYER BOOK
A two-week cycle of
morning and evening prayers
Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
The Editorial Committee

Arthur Paul Boers, one of four editors, introduces the overall design and structure of the daily morning and evening prayer. It follows a two-week cycle, with one week based on the Lord’s Prayer and the other on the Beatitudes. Each day follows a theme that is especially important in the Anabaptist tradition. The editors call this Anabaptist DNA.

Each morning prayer includes calls to praise, Jesus, discipleship, prayer and the Our Father. Each evening prayer includes the same calls plus a confession. The book also includes suggested songs from *Hymnal: A Worship Book*.

Once you have a copy, try it out with others. If that’s not possible, use it privately. Either way, adapt it according to the time available to you.

The editorial committe wants feedback: “We’re dreaming of developing offices for other church seasons and we’re considering if we need a four-week cycle instead of a two-week cycle for ordinary time.” Write Boers at 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, apboers@ambs.edu.—*Gordon Houser*

ful) than thou. People have an unfortunate tendency to turn disciplines into ends, even idols; we often forget that such practices are intended to lead us to God but are not themselves divine.

Formal organized prayer is not better than spontaneous prayer. We need not choose between prayer books and personal, heartfelt praying. We hope the book deepens prayer, gives more subjects for prayer and expands people's relationship with God.

An emphasis on group prayer does not diminish the place of individual prayer. That choice is false and unhelpful. We trust that people will adapt this book to personal use. Folks are welcome to add songs, Scripture readings, silence and other disciplines; conversely, they may shorten the services to suit their purposes.

This discipline connects us in prayer with others. Benedictine monks have a beautiful tradition: Toward the end of each of seven daily services, they pray for absent sisters and brothers. The communion of saints always exists, even when we are separated. We need one another's support, perhaps especially when we are not together. I often recall and pray for people who are not with me. Remembering them supports and encourages me in my prayer. We can connect with sisters and brothers in the faith when we share Scriptures and prayers with them.

Let us reject unhelpful choices between individual and group, spontaneous and scheduled, casual and structured prayer. Let us find a dynamic balance between the personal and the communal, impromptu and fixed times, free and planned modes of prayer. Morning and evening prayer touches on issues that run throughout Christian history: the relationship of individual and corporate prayer, unplanned and set prayers, fixed-time and unceasing prayer.

Ceaseless praise: The collection of prayers for two weeks of ordinary time is intended as a gift to fellow Christians and is offered in a spirit of testing and passionate hope that these practices may enrich the prayer of the church. To paraphrase an old hymn, we pray: "Take our moments and our days; let them flow in ceaseless praise."

Arthur Paul Boers teaches practical theology at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and attends Prairie Street Mennonite Church.

ADVENT REFLECTION

waiting

by Laurel Borisenko

What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by. The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn't put it out.— John 1:4,5, The Message

Advent is waiting. We people of faith go through this annual cycle of waiting, remembering and anticipation. We share with childlike anticipation great joy as we hear the story unfold, knowing the outcome but loving the unfolding just the same.

We anticipate God's blessing, just as ancient Israel did, though we know there will be blood, pain and suffering woven into the mix. Having lit our Advent candles, we pause to wait for the birth: night pregnant with waiting, darkness pregnant with hope, a Word waiting to be spoken.

I have been sheltered from the busyness and commercialism of North American Christmas. In my little house in Burkina Faso, it is dark and quiet with an extraordinary aura of peace. No lights, decorations, music or snow. I am not with the angel choirs, with Santa in the malls or even with Handel's *Messiah*. I am left with the written word, the Incarnate Word and (like Mary) the ponderings of my heart.

But I have not been sheltered from others' suffering. Burkina Faso is a terribly poor country. I see in villages babies with protruding, malnourished bellies and glazed-over eyes, their mothers with the same glaze of hopelessness after desperation does not work. When we finish a meal of fish and rice at a roadside stand, three street children descend on the remaining fish head and bones and strip it clean like barracudas. This is in contrast to the copious wealth gained by violence and corruption we see in the cities.

As I prepare my heart this year, I find that I skip the birth story and go directly to the murdered babies: Rachel and the mothers in Bethlehem who—unasked—sacrificed their sons for the Savior. The bloody afterbirth. Author Annie Dillard scorns the way we try to make the Christmas story into "a pretty and sensible picture, like something on a Christmas card." There is nothing pretty about having your first baby in a barn or fleeing terrified into the night to start your life as a refugee or hearing the screams of mothers who have had their baby sons ripped out of their arms to be murdered. It is as if our doorways have become marked with a big S for Santa, and the angel of the whole truth passes us by.

The truth is that Emmanuel, who came to ransom captive Israel, must first be given asylum from Israel. The Word incarnate came as a refugee into this world he spoke into being. And in a lovely redemptive reversal, it is Egypt—the country from which the Israelites fled as slaves—that provides a safe haven for the Holy Family.

In West Africa I find the Word incarnate in the eyes of urban refugee children. Their families can be found in obscure corners all over Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso's capital city, having fled the terrors in Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Central African Republic and, more recently, Darfur, Sudan. As I visit one home I see three children lying on a plastic mat on the cold concrete floor—maybe not so different from a feed bin in a barn.

Even in the face of this daily suffering I see such strength of spirit; I see warmth and generosity; I see smiles that shine like the rays of a star. I see Jesus. My African friends teach me about waiting. Our Advent reward is the baby born into the poor refugee family—much more like their families than like mine—and the brief and brilliant glimmer of hope, like the rays of a star consecrating the threshold of a barn.

Laurel Borisenko, from Edmonton, Alta., is part of the Mennonite Central Committee West Africa leadership team and is based in Burkina Faso. She is a member of Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church, Edmonton.

Lamb-centered ESCHATOLOGY

by Ted Lewis

Throughout the centuries, apocalyptic fervor has ebbed and flowed. During the Reformation era, for example, Europeans placed themselves onto the stage of history's final act. Their high tide included epidemic plagues, peasant revolts, war with Middle Eastern Turks, and, most significantly, the upheaval of Roman Catholic power.

As the 1600s led to the executions of faithful believers, many Anabaptists paid great attention to John's Apocalypse (or Revelation). Given the extreme expressions of Münster's teachings or the Münster uprising, Mennonites have had good reason to be wary of any apocalyptic vision that is taken seriously.

An easy response to such extremes is to avoid eschatology (eschaton means "last things") and emphasize servanthood in the here and now. Debates over the sequence of end-time scenarios seem silly or misguided. If the Sermon on the Mount is central, then it is enough.

When I read the New Testament, though, all the major parts dovetail. Eschatology is too big to avoid. We have to do something with it, and, as William Stringfellow wrote, we have to connect it to ethics. This article continues to show the distortions in the *Left Behind* viewpoint and offers a positive way to integrate New Testament eschatology with the same kingdom Jesus revealed.

The saints of the seven churches are not told what to conquer but how to conquer. Noncompliance with society's false ways is central.

The Dispensational *Left Behind* view is popular among conservative Christians. It maps out a literal, sequential unfolding of end-time scenery from the Bible. As in an action movie, the bad side intensifies its control over social institutions, and the good side, always in the minority, eventually wins the day with retributive justice.

The protagonists in the *Left Behind* fictional series form an espionage team to thwart the designs of the Antichrist (and assassinate him) and to support new believers. They may hesitate before using force or violence to achieve their goals, but since God's judgments are happening in parallel, the backing is there for them to "fight against the enemies of God."

There's an American feel to this triumphal, action-thriller narrative. But that is exactly how many first-century Jews felt. They expected a Messiah to be a catalyst for liberation against the Romans. Many ancient prophecies suggested the time had come. Many Jews longed for a messianic lion. And many chose to fight.

Years ago I often heard that in his first coming Jesus came as a lamb, but in his second coming he will come as a lion. However, in Revelation there is one reference to Jesus as a lion (suggesting a backward glance to his heritage), followed by 29 references to Jesus as the Lamb. Why so many? And why "the Lamb" in the midst of judgments, beasts and battles?

The Lamb emphasizes the means of God more than the ends of God. In other words, how God goes about things is vital, and one should not only focus on outcomes. Lambness entails the way of vulnerability, sacrifice, laying life down for others. While it implies this yielding to death, it is always for a higher, life-giving purpose. Lambness reveals God's unique mode of operation.

No passivity here. Jesus' proactive love for others amounts to good overcoming evil. The word "overcome" (as in Romans 12:21) is also translated "conquer." It appears in Revelation about 12 times. Most references of this Greek word "nikao" (ironically related to Nicolae, the Antichrist's name in the *Left Behind* books) pertain to the followers of Jesus, offering a new spin on conquering.

The saints of the seven churches are not told what to conquer but how to conquer. Noncompliance with society's false ways is central, hence the frequent call for patient endurance. The positive side is self-giving servanthood for others. In Revelation, bearing this "testimony of Jesus" may result in martyrdom, not because one openly said, "I'm with him," as Christians do in the *Left Behind* stories but because one embodies, in the Body, the very lambness of Jesus. Radical love puts one at odds with an imperial society.

With Jesus we share three unified things: "the persecu-

Lambness reveals God's unique mode of operation.

tion and the kingdom and the patient endurance" (Revelation 1:9). Because we enflesh the values of the oncoming kingdom, we will face tribulation in any era of history. That is why we are cheered on to endure. Since the Lamb has already been vindicated through resurrection for overcoming evil with good, we have greater support to overcome, not by conventional means of conquering but by following Jesus, "living as he lived," to the end.

The unfortunate thing about the *Left Behind* portrayal of eschatology is not only that it botches the New Testament understanding of Christians living through tribulation (see my first article, Nov. 16, page 15), but it also misses the content of what it means to be identified with Jesus the Lamb.

A Lamb-centered eschatology, rather than a prediction-centered eschatology, is driven by the unity between who Jesus is in his first coming and who Jesus will always be. The kingdom he inaugurated 2,000 years ago is the same kingdom that will encounter any opposition, now and in the future, and will be consummated at the end of this age.

One way to consider this continuity is to understand how Jesus and the New Testament audience thought of their era as the beginning of the end times. Jesus was the inbreaking of the future into the present. His healings, inclusions, love ethic, feasting and ultimately his resurrection became downpayments or first fruits of the coming new world.

Just as his newness clashed with the powers of his day, so our lived-out newness will clash with the powers of today and tomorrow.

But Jesus gave more than previews of a new future. He showed the means of God: the way of the Lamb. Only by laying life down for others can life be raised for others. There is a new content to his kingdom that reveals the core of a self-giving God, and it was his mission to be a faithful witness to this truth. Just as his newness clashed with the powers of his day, so our lived-out newness will clash with the powers of today and tomorrow.

This all resonates well with other passages that encourage us to be sober and watchful, living as if the "night" of today has passed and the "day" of the future is among us (Romans 13:12). Whenever Jesus and Paul deal with end-times issues, they redirect the attention to how we live in the present. Don't watch the sequence, watch your life. In Revelation it's, watch the Lamb. Indeed, worship the Lamb. For our picture of God and the future will shape the manner of our following.

In *The Gospel According to Tolkien*, Ralph Wood shows how it's a moral victory, not a military victory, that wins the day. He suggests that the virtue of courage, involving the willingness to kill in defense of the good (recall Boromir), can be transformed into the Christian virtue of martyrdom: "the willingness to make one's witness by being killed." He then refers to the battle of Pelennor Fields, where the fellowship maintains their faith with great endurance, "facing Sauron's armies like lambs led to the slaughter."

"For your sake we are being killed all the day long" (not complying with the imperial values of today's society); "we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered" (choosing to serve others in costly ways rather than being served in comfortable ways). "In all these things (experiences of loss) we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Romans 8:37). This is how we move from dominant forms of conquering to the Lamb's form of overcoming.

There's new wine among us, and the blood of a new covenant is in it. And only a new eschatological wineskin can hold it. Conventional apocalyptic wineskins that emphasize predictions and sequence and triumphal, militant victories will burst if the blood of the Lamb, the means of God, is poured into them.

When the eschatological imagination of the New Testament is seen as a vital expression of God's kingdom, of the ways of God best seen in Jesus, then we have come to a third-way view that has integrity with our ethics. For the post-resurrection Lamb continues to be invitational, noncoercive, judging the world for the sake of restoration, and we are invited to follow suit. TM

Ted Lewis attends Church of the Servant King in Eugene, Ore.

Communities
Pursuing
Christ's
Purpose

THIRD IN A SERIES
LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT

Fertile soil for leadership

Lessons of an Ohio farm girl shape her values as a Mennonite high school principal.

by Laurie L. Oswald

As an Ohio farm kid, Elaine Moyer picked tomatoes, drove tractors and became friends with Hispanic families in a world that's light years away from her role as principal of Christopher Dock Mennonite High School (CD) in Lansdale, Pa.

A three-decade career in education took her far from the farm of her parents, Kenneth and the late Violet Aeschilman, near Archbold, Ohio. But childhood was her greatest teacher in highlighting how important the values of following Christ and building community are in educating Mennonite Church USA's young people and shaping them as leaders.

Developing leaders is one of the denomination's priorities, one that Elaine's upbringing in Ohio prepared her to follow. On the farm with five siblings and playmates from farm worker families she learned that God creates each person as valuable, gifted and capable, she says. Elaine, CD's principal since 1990 and a former teacher and assistant principal, strives to model what she learned as a girl to young people and their teachers at CD.

"It was wonderful to grow up on the farm with its steers, pigs, grain, 40 acres of tomatoes and lots of Hispanic families who came to work with us," Elaine says. "It was a wonderful place to gain self-confidence and to relate in community while playing, working and worshiping with people from other backgrounds.

"Very early, the expectation was that I could do anything if I was willing to try. And we were to respect everyone for who they were and what they did. Everyone was valued, everyone was needed and everyone pulled their weight. The question wasn't what your skin color was or how old you were but, Are you doing your work and are you cooperating with others to get it done?"

Elaine remembers how each summer her family enlarged to include more Hispanic families, as seasonal migrant workers came to their farm. "We had our own little international community," she says. "We played softball on Sunday afternoons in our front yard and held church in one of our buildings, and a pastor from a Hispanic Mennonite church came to preach.

It was a wonderful place to gain self-confidence and to relate in community while playing, working and worshiping with people from other backgrounds.
—Elaine Moyer

Service: Elaine Moyer helps a Christopher Dock student.

Accountability and respect: "This togetherness taught us how to treat each other and fostered an accountability to and respect for each other—and those are lessons I've learned over and over again as I strive to help shape the CD campus with that same attitude."

The tiny community tucked into Ohio farmland taught her lessons that Hesston (Kan.) College and Bluffton (Ohio) University reinforced, she says. She attended Hesston, then served as a trainee for one year with Mennonite Central Committee as a nanny in North Germany and Switzerland. She returned to the United States, where she graduated from Bluffton in 1972 with a health, physical education and recreation degree.

After teaching in public schools in Lima and Bluffton, Ohio, she received her master's degree in physical education from Marshall University in Huntington, W.Va. Upon finishing, she and her husband, Dave, moved back to Bluffton, where she taught physical education at Bluffton University and later became department chair.

Dave changed careers from higher education to business, which brought them to eastern Pennsylvania. Just before the move from Bluffton to Lansdale with their two small sons, Jonathan and Jason, Elaine got a call in 1983 from Elam Peachey. The CD principal offered her a part-time physical education position.

"I remember when I got Elam's call: I was standing in the kitchen making dinner, with two toddlers playing in the background," she says. "It was wonderful timing and a wonderful offer. It got me out of the house some and gave the kids some freedom from me, too. It gave me a chance to reenter the world of school and community."

While she taught at CD, administrators encouraged her to seek her principal's certificate at Temple University. After Mike Lambright, coach and assistant principal, resigned, she became assistant principal. When Peachey went on sabbatical, Elaine became interim principal, then CD asked her to continued in that post permanently.

Fertile soil: Just as childhood was fertile soil for her adult life, her background as teacher and administrator is good "fertilizer" for wider church involvements. Along with her involvement on Bluffton University's board of trustees, CD belongs to the Mennonite Secondary Education Council (MSEC).

The ministry—with guidance from Mennonite Education Agency, a churchwide agency of the denomination—promotes Anabaptist values within Mennonite Church USA high schools. It helps them offer the distinctives of Christ-centeredness, educational excellence, opportunities, community, and peace and service.

"We hope and pray that our Mennonite schools can go beyond helping our students become good American citizens," Elaine says. "We also want to help them be citizens of the world by expressing their Christian witness through peace and service."

We want to help our students be citizens of the world by expressing their Christian witness through peace and service.—Elaine Moyer

"Being connected to my colleagues in such organizations as MSEC helps me help CD be a caring community where we can foster the freedom to express our individual giftedness as teachers, students and administrators and challenge each other to extend that community beyond our campus into the world." TM

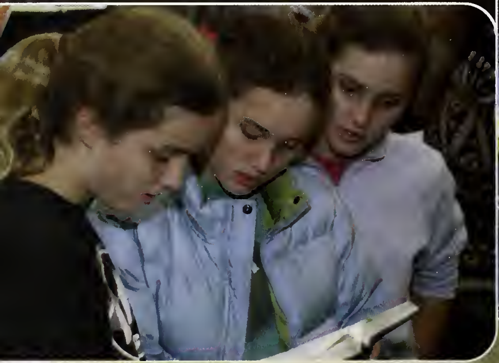
Laurie L. Oswald is News Service director for Mennonite Church USA.

mennonite churches usa

Community Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., is a young congregation whose founding group came out of the Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church. This group first met to worship in January 1985 at the Lancaster Opera Workshop. One year later, 59 charter members from Lancaster city and vicinity signed the first church covenant. In 1987, the congregation moved into its current location, a church building slated for demolition that had served for 25 years as the Theobald School of Ballet. Worship attendance numbers around 250. CMCL is a mixture of people of Mennonite and non-Mennonite background who bring together their various traditions for varied experiences. The group enjoys diversity in music, sermons and other worship activities. The congregation has adopted a structure that supports open interaction on church issues. Through humor and the awareness of God's Spirit, members challenge and support each other. —*Dale D. Gehman*

Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster

Below: Sisters Emily, Molly and Rebecca Kraybill sing the hymn "We Are People of God's Peace."



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Above: A band of Christian and Muslim musicians from Syria called Kulna Sawa, which means "all of us together" in Arabic, play at one of the many Community Mennonite Sunday concerts.

Left: Pam Dintaman, pastor, preaches the sermon "Spread Over All of Us Your Sukkah of Shalom."

Below: Naomi Hess gets a lift from Kelvin Mack as she places grass on top of the bamboo hut during some hands on learning about Sukkah.

Left: Mary Steffy tells stories in the library during the Christian education hour.

Photos by
Dale D. Gehman

Left: Elders Phil Kauffman-Jantzi and Ruth Hartzler Martin, pastor Pam Dintaman and council member Katy Heinzel talk outside the church.

God names himself

Karl Landis is director of leadership development for Lancaster Mennonite Conference and attends New Life Fellowship in Ephrata, Pa.

More and more Christians seem to use feminine names for God as an act of compassion to those who might find male names for God off-putting. This is based on the arguments that God's nature is beyond sexuality, biblical writers wrote for patriarchal audiences, and women and girls may feel excluded from or limited in the Christian community if we use male names and pronouns for God.

This appeal invites us onto dangerous theological ground for four main reasons.

First, the Scriptures are God's self-revelation to us, including the names he reveals for himself. Biblical Christian faith claims no knowledge of God beyond what he has revealed to us through his words and deeds in the histories of Israel, Jesus Christ and the church. The Scriptures are far more than just what patriarchally-minded men chose to write about their experiences. They are God's inspired revelation.

While it is true God revealed himself through the writings and experiences of fallible, culture-bound men and women, we have no reason to believe God is disappointed with or embarrassed by the character or content of his revelation either in Scripture (the written Word) or in Jesus (the living Word). Jesus tells us, "The Scriptures testify about me," and God calls Jesus "my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased." Jesus, Peter and Paul all refer to the Scriptures without any hint of disappointment with its style or content.

It is true that the God of the Bible has no sexuality and is beyond gender distinctions. Sexuality is a created phenomenon, both maleness and femaleness have their source in God, and both men and women have unique and valuable contributions to make to the kingdom of God, but none of this means that we should rename the God we know only through his revelation.

Second, as Christ-centered believers, Anabaptists have given priority to the example and words of Jesus in making theological and ethical decisions. It is Jesus who introduces the notion of God as Father into God's unfolding revelation. No one before Jesus had called God Father. Jesus also tells us his Father will become our Father if we believe his message. We should be unabashed about following Jesus' example and using his words to invite everyone to be reconciled to our heavenly Father.

Third, Jesus also unveils the astonishing truth that the one God is actually a trinity when he reveals God's Trinitarian name, "Father, Son and Holy Spirit." Jesus addresses God as Father, understands himself to be the Son and promises the Holy Spirit. As one writer says, "The historic identity of the Christian faith is at stake if [this] structure is obscured or [if] the best name we have [for the Trinitarian God] is abandoned." Using feminine names for God obscures the Trinitarian language of the Scriptures.

Fourth, while the Bible includes feminine *similes* for God, it never uses feminine *metaphors* or feminine names for God. This is a crucial and material distinction. God may be *like* a woman crying out in childbirth (Isaiah 42:14) or *like* a woman searching for a lost coin (Luke 15:8) or *like* a nursing mother in his awareness of his children (Isaiah 49:15) or *like* a hen gathering her chicks (Matthew 23:37, Luke 13:34), but the Scriptures never say that God *is* a woman or that he *is* a nursing mother. On the other hand, they do say that God *is* Father, that he *is* King, that Jesus *is* the Good Shepherd and that he *is* Lord.

Some have seen this as evidence that the biblical writers, steeped in patriarchy, could not imagine God as female. The truth is they were far more familiar with feminine deities than we are. They knew, from the evidence of the religions around them, that using feminine language for the Deity results in distortions about the nature of God and of his relationship to the creation. Christian groups that have used feminine names for God have ended up confused about the distinction between God and his creation, undermining a central tenet of historic Christian faith.

I am sympathetic to the compassion that motivates the use of feminine names for God, but the risks we run in doing so are too great. We can be confident that God's self-revelation will stand the test of time without our editorial assistance. After all, these are his names, it is his gospel we proclaim, and he is the one searching for the lost.

For more information see *Speaking the Christian God*, edited by Alvin Kimel (Eerdmans, 1992).

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **The cosmic oratorio**—David Boshart
- **Do you need Christmas?**—Ken Gibble

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Charlotte 2005 will be 'family reunion'

Planners hope theme appeals to theological diversity in Canada, U.S. churches.

Charlotte 2005 is a much-awaited "family reunion," since it will be the first meeting of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada since the transformation in 2002 of the former General Conference Mennonite Church and the former Mennonite Church. The former denominations were binational, but the new churches formed along national boundaries. The two former denominations held their last joint gathering in St. Louis in 1999.

It's time to connect again but in a brand new way, says the committee members planning the Charlotte 2005 adult and youth conventions.

"This is the first-ever event in which the two new denominations have met together, and so that's really exciting," says Pam Peters-Pries, executive secretary of support services for Mennonite Church Canada.

Ron Byler, associate executive director for Mennonite Church USA, agrees. "We look forward to renewing relationships and celebrating our common foundation found in the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective and the Vision: Healing and Hope statement," Byler says.

Committee member Mildred Roth of New Hamburg, Ont., says she hopes Charlotte 2005 will give people a bigger perspective of the Mennonite Church throughout North America.

"I hope many Canadians will come to this assembly to experience [what] being Mennonite means beyond their local context," she says. "There's just nothing like singing and praying with hundreds of other Mennonites."

The joint planning process also helps the two denominations share ideas that have worked within each group to build up the entire North American Mennonite family.

For example, Canadian planning committee members say their use of table groups for the first time during the summer assembly in Winkler, Man., was a huge success. The Canadians learned the idea from Mennonite Church USA, which has used table groups in the last two biennial assembly delegate sessions and other settings.

During Charlotte 2005 planning sessions in early fall, Roth shared the idea of a faith family festival that Mennonite Church Canada hosted in Winkler. Planners are using that idea to develop a carnival-festival one afternoon.

"What Mennonite Church Canada did with [the festival] has a lot of appeal," says Jorge Vallejos, director of convention planning for Mennonite Church USA. "We want to do something intergenerational that draws in people of all ages."

Charlotte 2005 also has the potential to strengthen bonds among people of many different backgrounds because unity with the Spirit of God can build bridges across national and theological boundaries, Vallejos says.

"Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA constituencies represent the entire theological spectrum, with some people calling themselves 'conservative' and others are not," he says. "But people all along the spectrum can embrace the focus of Charlotte."—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA constituencies represent the entire theological spectrum ... But people all along the spectrum can embrace the focus of Charlotte.—Jorge Vallejos

Charlotte 2005 logo

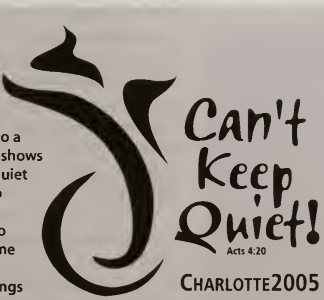
Ken Gingerich, art director for Mennonite Church USA and designer of the Charlotte 2005 logo (below), believes that Mennonites are moving into a new season. He hopes the logo shows the transition from being "the quiet in the land" to not being able to keep quiet.

Gingerich created the logo to convey the Charlotte 2005 theme from Acts 4:20: "We can't stop telling about the wonderful things that we have seen and heard."

Gingerich first created the image of a trumpet to signify the theme. But as he and others added elements, it turned into the shape of a person.

"We discovered a more human form that replicated the joy and enthusiasm of the healed lame man [found in the Acts passage] who was there to testify about Jesus in the temple court," Gingerich says.

"It's important to realize that we are not trumpeting our own horn," he says. "We are giving witness to the healing and transforming power of God. As we move from becoming the quiet in the land to the bold, let's stay focused on praising, worshiping and giving testimony to the healing love of our creator."



During his own process in creating the logo, Gingerich says it was important that he connect with the past as well as the present and the future.

"Our history has taught us that speaking out can be costly," he says. "Historically, we withdrew into the relative safety of small towns and farms, becoming more comfortable with simply living out our faith than with explaining why we lived a certain way.

"In some ways our witness has experienced the crippling effects of being too quiet for too long. Our 'quietness' has also been a sort of prison—although it has given us a perspective on some of the ways the message and power of Jesus' reconciling love should be shared." —*Ken Gingerich and Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Volunteers are lifeblood of Hopi school

Mennonite Voluntary Service unit has served school for more than 50 years.

Tonia Stutzman

Sixth-grader Tate Kalwiseoma said he asked his mother if he could attend Hopi Mission School because one of his friends attended the school. "My friend … said you can learn about God. I didn't know who God was. They do Bible studies. It's fun."

With the closest movie theater 92 miles away, the remote mesa village of Kykotsmovi, Ariz., is not the sort of metropolitan mecca that typically attracts young people fresh from college eager to embark on their careers.

Yet for more than 50 years, a unique Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) unit, created specifically to fill the need for teachers at the desert mission school in Kykotsmovi, has done just that. It has offered young volunteer teachers, in teams of seven or eight at a time, the opportunity to share their knowledge and their faith with the students at Hopi Mission School. In turn, it has given many Hopi students their first real interaction with people from the dominant culture.

"The service [the school] provided was invaluable," says Lance Polingyouma, who attended the school from 1976 through 1984. "A great education was always at hand."

Polingyouma now serves on the Hopi Mission school board and works with the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Scottsdale, Ariz., as a cultural interpreter, sharing the perspective of the Hopi people.

Established in 1951 by a predecessor agency of Mennonite Mission Network, the school has always relied heavily on the MVS program for a steady supply of volunteer teachers, according to administrator and fund-raiser Bill Zuercher.

"We couldn't survive without MVS," Zuercher says. "We've had as many as nine MVS workers at one time. That's been our lifeblood."

It's not unusual, Zuercher adds, for teachers who come to the school for a one-year commitment through MVS to find the assignment so fulfilling that they wind up staying on an additional year or even longer. For example, Hannah Zehr of Lowville, N.Y., a few months into her first year of teaching at the school, has already begun to consider a longer commitment there.

"You're very quickly a necessary member of the staff," Zehr says. "You're incorporated in and needed. The classroom is my mission field. Showing those kids that I love them and that God loves them is a fundamental part of what I want to do as a teacher. I initially told [MVS administrators] I would teach here one year. But I have a feeling I will be here at least another year longer—maybe more. I couldn't have asked for a better place to start teaching."

For Sharon Johnson of Aurora, Colo., who holds the record for the longest-running MVS commitment at Hopi Mission School, it's as much the people in the community as it is the children in the classroom. "The community is very friendly and welcoming," says Johnson, now in her seventh year at the school. "And the kids see themselves as a family here."

Wave Dashee is the school's first paid Hopi teacher who grew up on the reservation. After 18 years of teaching in the Arizona public schools, where class sizes averaged 30 to 35 students, she especially appreciates the opportunity to work closely with the children at HMS. Ultimately the goal is to have all paid Hopi teachers on staff.

"In [the public schools], if the kids needed help, they didn't want to talk," Dashee says. "Here, the kids will come up and say, 'I don't understand this. Can you help me?' They're more willing to accept the education that you give them."—*Ann Graham Price of Mennonite Mission Network News Service*

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an invitation to visit
your local coffeeshop with you
chocolate

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Burkina Faso congregations growing

Villagers watch wise elders being baptized: this new faith 'of very great value.'

The residents of Burkina Faso's savannahs welcome rain on a picnic day as a great blessing. So joy abounded on Sept. 12, when 25 baptismal candidates waited inside the Kotoura Mennonite Church until a heavy downpour—drowned out by complex rhythms of a drum, marimba, gourd shakers, tambourines and metal gongs accompanying the dancing congregation's songs—ceased pounding the red, baked-mud walls.

More than 20 years ago, Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission workers anticipated that building a foundation for the church among the Sicité-speaking people of Burkina Faso would be a slow process. God had other plans.

Within two weeks of the Mennonite missionaries' arrival among West Africa's traditional ethnic group renowned for powerful sorcery, God's Word began to take root in the heart of the chief's son, Tiéba Traoré.

Traoré shared his new-found happiness with such abandon that before a year passed, a small congregation gathered in Kotoura several times weekly to pray, worship and study God's Word as it was translated.

Over the years, the Kotoura congregation gave birth to two other congregations in neighboring villages. These three congregations gathered around a baptismal font in the Kotoura church courtyard as the Sept. 12 rain abated to a gentle patter. Members sang of death being drowned in the waters of baptism and the newly baptized person emerging from those same waters to a reborn life in Jesus Christ.

While showers of blessings sprinkled the congregations and curious onlookers, Abdias Coulibaly, national president of Burkina Faso's Mennonite church, and the Kotoura pastor, Ezekiel Maadou Traoré, immersed each candidate in thigh-deep baptismal water drawn from a nearby well. Before being lowered backward beneath the water, the candidate announced, "I want to be baptized and become a worker for the Lord."

Because of the church's location in the middle of the village, non-Christian spectators joined the crowd to witness the baptisms of men and women from 15 to 60 years old.

"Seeing elderly mamas entering into the water to be baptized was a great testimony," says Daniel Kompaoré, a church leader in Burkina Faso and husband of Anne Garber Kompaoré, a mission worker jointly supported by Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness through Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission.

"The non-Christians were thinking, 'If these wise people are leaving old traditions behind, this new faith must be something concrete and of very great value,'" says Kompaoré.

Daniel Kompaoré

Ezekiel Maadou Traoré (left), pastor of the Kotoura Mennonite Church, and Abdias Coulibaly, national president of Burkina Faso's Mennonite Church, baptize Aminata Traoré, one of 25 new members received into the church in September.

Although 32 candidates from four villages desired baptism, only 25 from two villages—16 from Kotoura and nine from neighboring Sayaga—passed the oral test to determine adequate assimilation of Christian knowledge.

Mennonite tradition in Burkina Faso requires questioning of baptismal candidates by church leaders to be certain each candidate understands the importance and implications of baptism.

At the end of the ceremony, worshipers and onlookers alike gathered around big enamel basins of toh (thick corn porridge) and meat sauce to continue conversation about the day's events.—*Lynda Hollinger-Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network News Service*

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Alicia Miller

Kevin King (left), former Mennonite Central Committee material resources manager, worked with Margaret Hassan in Iraq to distribute MCC school kits.

MCC mourns Margaret Hassan's death

She rearranged her schedule to help distribute school kits to Iraqi children.

Mennonite Central Committee leaders expressed their condolences to CARE and the family of Margaret Hassan, the CARE leader who was kidnapped in Baghdad, Iraq, on Oct. 19 and killed several weeks later. MCC workers who had contact with her through the years admired her commitment and leadership.

"We lament and mourn the passing of one who gave her life for the welfare of others," MCC executive director Ronald J.R. Mathies wrote to CARE. "With you, we are dismayed and outraged at this senseless killing, and the entire context and years of events that contributed to it. We have and will continue to pray God's comfort, courage and care in this difficult time. And we continue to work and pray for justice and peace in the region."

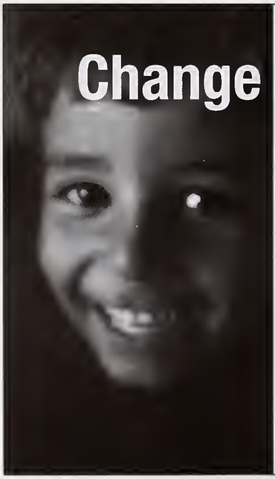
MCC worked with CARE before, during and after the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq to distribute material resources, including giving out thousands of relief kits and providing equipment to hospitals to help ensure a supply of clean water.

Kevin King, MCC's former material resources manager and current executive coordinator of Mennonite Disaster Service, recalls Hassan's love for children and her excitement at handing out MCC school kits to them. She told King how she cleared her schedule to be part of school kit distributions and spoke passionately about the "bright shining wonder and glow in children's faces" upon receiving new school supplies for the first time.

Hassan continued her work amid increasing insecurity. King last met with her in Baghdad in 2003.

"Despite the tragedy and the dangers, she still had a love for the rebuilding of Iraq," King says. "I'll miss her. I'll always associate her with a strong leader and voice of reason, a voice of humanity. I hope and pray that her blood spilled to the ground will not be in vain, that other voices will rise up."

Despite growing insecurity in the region, MCC's work in Iraq continues through partners, primarily Iraqi humanitarian organizations. MCC also continues its partnership with Church World Service through the All Our Children initiative, which supports projects that enhance the well-being of Iraqi children.—*MCC News Service*



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WORKERS

Bergey, Laura, Harrisonburg, Va., began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service Aug. 4 in Chicago with Erie Neighborhood House.

Bender, Melanie, Hesston, Kan., began a one-year term Aug. 21 as a Service Adventure unit leader in Johnstown, Pa.

Bonham, Rusty and Mary Lou, Newton, Kan., began July 21 as Service Adventure unit leaders in Albany, Ore.

Buckler, Jenni, was installed Aug. 29 as part of the new ministry team at Arthur (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Campbell, Matthew, New Philadelphia, Ohio, began Aug. 28 as a volunteer with Service Adventure in Philippi, W.V.

Clymer, Marisa, Harrisonburg, Va., began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service Sept. 13 as a regional coordination associate with Chicago Teacher's Learning Center.

Coblentz, Tyler, Kalona, Iowa, began Aug. 30 as a volunteer with Service Adventure in Albany, Ore.

Dunn, Brian, Burton, Ohio, began a two-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service Sept. 13 as a computer consultant with Community IT Innovators, Washington, D.C.

Fridley, Jessica, Elkhart, Ind., began Aug. 16 as a volunteer with Service Adventure in Johnstown, Pa.

Gerig, Jason, Albany, Ore., began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service Sept. 9 as a refugee case manager and placement specialist with Jewish Vocational Service, Kansas City, Kan.

Goering, Joel, Silver Spring, M.D., began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service Sept. 4 as a community builder with Rosedale Development Association, Kansas City, Kan.

Guengerich, Vernard, was installed Sept. 12 as transitional team lead pastor at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind.

Helmus, Nora, Lancaster, Pa., began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service Sept. 13 as a program associate with Tucson (Ariz.) Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network.

Hudgens, Ric, was ordained Oct. 3 as pastor at Reba Place Church, Evanston, Ill.

Huerta, Juan Carlos, was licensed Sept. 12 as pastor of Centro Cristiano Vida Abundante, Holland, Mich.

Kauffman, Valerie, Orrville, Ohio, began Aug. 16 as a volunteer with Service Adventure in Johnstown, Pa.

Kennel, Megan, Harrisonburg, Va., began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service Oct. 1 as a community activities leader with Tenderloin Housing Clinic, San Francisco, Calif.

Kliewer, Jocelyn, Hillsboro, Kan., began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service Aug. 9 as an after-school team teacher with East Dallas (Texas) Community School.

Lehman, Laura, Harrisonburg, Va., began Aug. 5 as a volunteer with Service Adventure in Albuquerque, N.M.

Linsenmeyer, Anna, Golden, Colo., began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service Sept. 13 as an art therapist with ElderHealth Northwest, Seattle, Wa.

Marner, Lynn, was installed Aug. 29 as part of the new ministry team at Arthur (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Miller, Stacy, Orrville, Ohio, began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service July 27 as a health educator and registered nurse in San Antonio, Texas.

Mullet, Michelle, Middlebury, Ind., began Aug. 8 as a volunteer with Service Adventure in Raleigh, N.C.

Musser, Crystal, Stephens City, Va., began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service Sept. 13 as an assistant teacher at Educare Center with Habitat for Humanity International, Americus, Ga.

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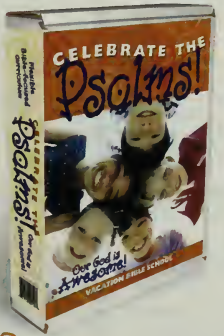

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Peterson, Kirsten, Pella, Iowa, began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service Aug. 28 as a social services coordinator with Bread for the City, Washington, D.C.

Rhodes, Glen, was installed Aug. 29 as part of the new ministry team at Arthur (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Rhodes, Martin, was licensed towards ordination Nov. 7 at Christiansburg (Va.) Mennonite Fellowship.

Rodman, Jolyn, Angola, Ind., began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service Sept. 13 with St. Phillips School and Community Center, Dallas, Texas.

Roeschley, Jane, was ordained July 11 as pastor at Mennonite Church of Normal (Ill.).

Rush, Amanda, Glenside, Pa., began Aug. 30 as a volunteer with Service Adventure in Albany, Ore.

Sanders, Melissa, Louisville, Ohio, began Aug. 30 as a volunteer with Service Adventure in South Bend, Ind.

Schmidt, Jason, Whitewater, Kan., began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service Aug. 16 in La Jara, Colo.

Schrag, Joseph, Wichita, Kan., began Aug. 5 as a volunteer with Service Adventure in Albuquerque, N.M.

Short, Bryce, Gridley, Ill., began Aug. 5 as a volunteer with Service Adventure in Albuquerque, N.M.

Showalter, Justin, Linville, Va., began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service Sept. 13 as a marketing and development assistant with Habitat for Humanity, St. Louis, Mo.

Stoltzfus, John, was ordained Nov. 7 as pastor at Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Trainum, Amanda, Harrisonburg, Va., began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service Aug. 20 as a special education teacher and aide with Edgewood Children's Center, St. Louis, Mo.

Troyer, Ryan, Lititz, Pa., began Aug. 9 as a volunteer with Service Adventure in Philippi, W.V.

Waltner, Kristy, Moundridge, Kan., began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service Sept. 13 as a home repair worker with Community Home Repair Program, Tucson, Ariz.

Weaver, Justin and Lyz, Middlebury, Ind., began July 21 as Service Adventure unit leaders in South Bend, Ind.

Yoder, Dustin, Goshen, Ind., began Aug. 30 as a volunteer with Service Adventure in Albany, Ore.

Yoder, Emily, Garden City, Mo., began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service Aug. 10 as a resident supervisor with Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of San Antonio (Texas), Inc.

Yoder, Emily, Archbold, Ohio, began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service July 10 as a receptionist with Interfaith Housing Services, Inc., Hutchinson, Kan.

Yoder, Heather, Harrisonburg, Va., began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service Sept. 13 as an employment specialist with Lutheran Social Services, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Yoder, Justin, Harrisonburg, Va., began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service Sept. 13 as a resettlement assistant with Lutheran Social Services, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Yoder, Luke, Archbold, Ohio, began a two-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service Aug. 10 as a program assistant with San Luis Valley Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program, La Jara, Colo.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Christophel, Andrew Solomon, Sept. 20, to Todd and Janet Wagner Christophel, Ephrata, Pa.

Derstine, Celeste Josephine, Oct. 26, to Zachariah and Kara Souder Derstine, Telford, Pa.

Eby, Joshua Omar, Oct. 24, to Lawrence and Melanie Blosser Eby, Harrisonburg, Va.

Greenmun, Katrina Jo, Aug. 30, to Jeff and Janelle Miller Greenmun, Waynesboro, Va.

Harris, Jessica Yvonne, Oct. 6, to Doug and Yvonne Monroe Harris, Stuarts Draft, Va.

Hoag, Gabriella Marie, Feb. 10, 2002, received for adoption Sept. 16 by Jon and Laura Nafziger Hoag, Toledo, Ohio.

Hoag, Jason Dean, Jan. 10, 2003, received for adoption Sept. 16 by Jon and Laura Nafziger Hoag, Toledo, Ohio.

Kaufman, Zachery, Oct. 26, to Mike and Michelle Weaver Kaufman, St. Louis, Mo.

Kossler, Cameron Jean, Sept. 20, to Mark and Karla Kossler, Springfield, Ill.

Litwiller, Morgan, Aug. 13, to Dexter and Debbie Litwiller, Morton, Ill.

Magill, Lane Asher, Oct. 22, to Ryan and Audrey Gaeddert Magill, Denver, Colo.

Miller, Gennavieve Nicole, Nov. 3, to Stephen and Andrea Garver Miller, Lakeville, Ohio.

Moyer, Ainsley Sage, Nov. 3, to Christopher and Chari Landes Moyer, Telford, Pa.

Musselman, Simone Alexis, Nov. 12, to Terrill and Jessica Luster Musselman, Akron, Ohio.

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Pielak, Isaiah Luke, Oct. 26, to Chase and Jennifer Pielak, Claremont, Calif.

Ries, Jadyn Kaylee, Oct. 25, to James and Charmaine Mendel Ries, Boulder, Colo.

Sacra, Joelle Grace, Oct. 28, to David and Julie Lehman Sacra, Harrisonburg, Va.

Schroeer, Lucia Seraphina Savale, Sept. 2, to Christopher and Dorothea Schroeer, Cologne, Germany.

Smucker, Paige Jolene, Nov. 1, to Todd and Rhonda Hochstetler Smucker, Goshen, Ind.

Stuckey, Tyler Wayne, Oct. 6, to Wayne and Melody Miller Stuckey, Wichita, Kan.

Suter, Elam Riley, Sept. 5, to Peter and Kim Ruhe Suter, Pandora, Ohio.

Ulrich, Tyler Wyatt, Oct. 19, to Dennis and Jenny Ulrich, Lowpoint, Ill.

Welty Peachey, Allysen Mei Emily, May 10, 2003, received for adoption Sept. 27 by Jon and Andrea Welty Peachey, Norwich, Conn.

Wenger, Colin Robert, Nov. 8, received for adoption Nov. 10 by Jeffrey and Lynelle Sollenberger Wenger, Elizabethtown, Pa.

Wright, Ethan Josef, Nov. 5, to David and Becky Wright, Pontiac, Ill.

Yoder, Matthew Joseph, Jan. 24, received for adoption Aug. 31 by Joseph and Amy Courtney Yoder, Sugarcreek, Ohio.

Yost, Claire Madison, Nov. 2, to Matt and Abby Miller Yost, Knoxville, Tenn.

MARRIAGES

Coates/Ropp: Susan Coates, Champaign, Ill., and Martin Ropp, Champaign, Oct. 9 in Missouri.

Condon/Ziegler: John Paul Condon, Encinitas, Calif., and Lara Ziegler, Encinitas, Oct. 23 in an outdoor ceremony in New Haven, Conn.

Delp/Geesey: Wanda Byler Delp, Manheim, Pa., and Fred Geesey, New Providence, Pa., Nov. 7 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Link/Ulrich: Amy Link, Peoria, Ill., and Matt Ulrich, Metamora, Ill., Sept. 10 at Weaver Ridge Golf Course, Peoria.

Miller/Nussbaum: Lisa Miller, Goshen, Ind., and John Nussbaum, Goshen, Sept. 18 at Dunlap United Methodist Church, Elkhart, Ind.

DEATHS

Correction: In the Nov. 2 issue of The Mennonite, Goldie J. Miller Bender's information was listed incorrectly. The name of her youngest daughter is Laurie, not Laura. There are six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Bauman, Ted, 73, Bluffton, Ohio, died Sept. 13. Spouse: Barbara Mase Bauman. Parents: Laurel and Ollia Bauman. Children: Mike, Maureen Noe, Calvin; three step-children; four grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 15 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Brubacher, Myra, 83, Elmira, Ont., died Sept. 6. Spouse: Elmer Brubacher (deceased). Parents: Ervin and Edna Shoemaker. Children: Neil (deceased), Maurice (deceased), Lois Gingrich; five grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 9 at Floradale (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Burbank, Lita Rose Tsosie, 73, Chinle, Ariz., died Oct. 19 of cancer. Spouse: Peter Burbank. Father: Hosteen Nez Tsosie. Children: Raymond, Freemond; five grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 26 at Blue Gap (Ariz.) Mennonite Church.

Dick, Cornelius (Chris), 81, Nampa, Idaho, died Oct. 17. Spouse: Katherine (Tina) Wall Dick. Parents: Paul and Susanna Dick. Children: Chris, Richard, Ruth McGrath, Susanne Redford, Carol Birt, Nancy Stutler; 15 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 20 at Alsip and Persons Tranquility Chapel, Nampa.

Engle, Ellen Clark Herr, 83, Bluffton, Ohio, died Oct. 18. Spouse: Royce Engle. Parents: John Paul and Goldie Clark. Children: Gay Norris, Tom Herr, Richard Herr, Mary Herr; seven step-children; 10 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 22 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Goossen, Theodor, 92, Beatrice, Neb., died Oct. 29. Spouse: Dorthy Claassen Goossen. Parents: Andrew P. and Helen Penner Goossen. Children: Ronald D., Darlene Dieckhoff; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 1 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice.

Hertzler, Lois Shank, 76, Sarasota, Fla., died Sept. 30. Spouse: Elam K. Hertzler. Parents: Samuel A. and Mary Kate Geil Shank. Children: Ann Stutsman, Carol Fiedler, Kevin; 10 grandhchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 10 at Bethel Mennonite Church Cemetery, Sarasota.

Hochstetler, Emery J., 86, Kalona, Iowa, died Oct. 26 of heart failure. Spouse: Audrey Swartzendruber Hochstetler. Parents: Eli and Edna Hochstetler. Children: Jim, Jane Garber, Marla Longenecker, Bill, Ann Fretz; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 29 at West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

Jantzi, Jerry J., 90, Glendale, Ariz., died Oct. 6. Spouse: Alta Mae Jantzi (deceased). Parents: John and Fannie Jantzi. Children: Ron, Boyd, Gerald, Debbie Fitzpatrick; five grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 14 at Glencroft Care Center, Glendale.

Klassen, Emily Steinle, 102, Halstead, Kan., died Nov. 5. Spouse: Abram Klassen (deceased). Parents: Frederick and Katharina Weimer Steinle. Children: Joan Pjesky, John; five grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 8 at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

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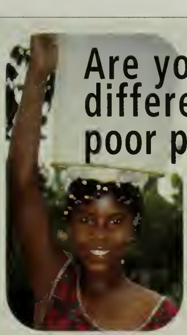

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Kuhns, Joyce E., 66, Wayland, Iowa, died Nov. 3. Spouse: Dennis R. Kuhns. Parents: Park N. and Mary Detweiler Eberly. Children: Jennifer K. Hershberger, Kris Anne Swartley; three grandchildren. Memorial service: Nov. 6 at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Mast, Lucille Falb, 65, Wooster, Ohio, died Sept. 30 of a heart attack. Spouse: Elvin Mast. Parents: Mylon and Saloma Smucker Falb. Children: Cheryl, Ed, David, Kathy Gerber; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 4 at Smithville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Milne, Robert, 85, Glendale, Ariz., died Oct. 17 following a terminal illness. Spouse: Freda King Milne. Parents: George and Almeda Bowman Milne. Children: Ronald, Beverly Hershberger; 10 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 30 at Glencroft (Ariz.) Community Church.

Moyer, Durant W., 96, Souderton, Pa., died Oct. 30. Spouse: Mary Ellen Moyer (deceased). Parents: Elihu and Elizabeth Moyer. Child: Esther Mattern; one grandchild; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 3 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Reusser, Selma Ediger, 86, Hesston, Kan., died Nov. 14. Spouse: Gail Reusser (deceased). Parents: Herman and Tena Ediger. Children: Joan Turetsky, Beverly, Mary; three grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 18 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Ross, Myron E., 77, Newport News, Va., died Oct. 17. Spouse: Leona Ross. Parents: Robert and Clara Good Ross. Children: Gerald, Nicole, Michael; six grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 21 at Warwick River Mennonite Church, Newport News.

Shetler, Ralph Milton, 84, Scotts Mills, Ore., died Oct. 18 of cancer. Spouse: Margaret Pursley Shetler. Parents: Milton and Ada Miller Shetler. Children: Marvin, David, Howard, Jerold, Lawrence, Ruby Honan, Daniel (deceased); 27 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 21 at Zion Mennonite Church, Hubbard, Ore.

Swartzendruber, Frances Quirin, 73, Scottsdale, Ariz., died Oct. 29 of cancer. Spouse: H.D. Swartzendruber. Parents: Aloyse and Therese Ruchel Quirin. Children: Fred, Dan, David; five grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 1 at Trinity Mennonite Church, Glendale, Ariz.

Thimm, Rosa Bartel, 82, Beatrice, Neb., died Oct. 26. Spouse: Randolph Thimm (deceased). Parents: John and Susie Friesen Bartel. Children: Sheryl Stewart, Randolph Jr.; five grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 30 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice.

Tyson, Esther P. Sangrey, 94, Lancaster, Pa., died Oct. 17 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Aaron S. Tyson (deceased). Parents: B. Frank and Sue Ann Peters Sangrey. Children: Edna S. Brubaker, Jeanette S. Ebersole, Lois S. Neuenschwander; Isaac W., Josephine S. Brubaker, Timothy L., James E., Warren L., Mary Susan Corey; 43 grandchildren; 96 great-grandchildren; six great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 21 at Hernley Mennonite Church, Manheim, Pa.

Wengerd, Kathleen Miller, 70, Springs, Pa., died Oct. 13 in a traffic accident. Spouse: Budd A. Wengerd. Parents: Ernest and Emma Lohr Miller. Children: Beth Green, Lisa Teisue, Trina Wengerd; four grandchildren. Memorial service: Oct. 16 at Springs Mennonite Church.

Wyse, Curtis, 44, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, died Nov. 2 of cancer. Spouse: Jodi Conrad Wyse. Parents: Gene and Alice Roth Wyse. Children: Kelsey, Kaleb. Funeral: Nov. 5 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Ziegler, Paul K., 87, Souderton, Pa., died Oct. 31. Spouse: Kathryn Yoder Ziegler (deceased). Parents: Wallace and Lizzie Koch Ziegler. Child: Shirley Frankenfield; eight grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 3 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

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Goshen College department of sociology/anthropology and social work seeks applicants for a ***tenure-track position in sociology.*** We are seeking a candidate who has a curricular focus in the areas of sociological theory and methods. Consideration will be given to any specialization within sociology. Additional background in anthropology is preferred. Candidates must exhibit strong teaching credentials. A Ph.D. in sociology is required by fall 2005. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Women and minority people are encouraged to apply. To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment. Closing date for applications is Dec. 25.

Bluffton University invites applications for the following tenure-track positions beginning fall 2005.

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Social work. Ph.D. or ABD preferred. MSW degree from an accredited social work program and minimum of two years of practice experience is required. Must demonstrate effective teaching skills and experience. International experience is a plus. Teach a range of introductory, human behavior social environment, mezzo-practice, human diversity and policy courses. Serve as director of fieldwork activities, placing students for spring semester internships and providing orientation for new field instructors. Other duties include academic advising and serving on institution committees. Scholarship is supported, and service activities with community/church are encouraged. Part of a two full-time faculty program, within a multidisciplinary department, with a growing number of majors. Review of applications begins Jan. 15 and continues until an appointment is made.

Compensation for these positions is commensurate with education and experience within the university pay scale. For additional information see www.bluffton.edu. Send letter of interest, curriculum vita, three letters of reference (submitted directly from referee), and official transcripts to Elaine Suderman, Administrative Assistant for Academic Affairs, Bluffton University, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, OH 45817-2104. Members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. EOE.

Freelance designer wanted to design portions of **The Mennonite**. This part-time opportunity begins Feb. 1, 2005. If interested, send resumé and samples to Everett@TheMennonite.org or mail to The Mennonite, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46256. For more information, call 574-535-6051.

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All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority. CMU is committed to equity in employment. The successful applicant will be expected to have a commitment to the church and the mission of CMU.

Applications comprised of a cover letter, curriculum vitae and contact information for three references should be submitted to:

Director of Human Resources, Canadian Mennonite University,
500 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3P 2N2
or e-mailed to swarkentin@cmu.ca.

Goshen College seeks ***internship development coordinator*** to work with all departments in creating new internship opportunities in Indiana, particularly in our region. This is an initial 30-month grant-funded position with the possibility of continued employment. The coordinator will provide leadership, management and administration in the development and implementation of new internship opportunities, as well as promote the services of the Career Services Office. Bachelor's degree required. At least two years of experience in an educational, business or organizational setting. Candidates with work experience in a sales or marketing environment or with internships are preferred.

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Goshen College seeks ***full-time development officer*** to begin in September 2005. The development officer will work with the college relations team to cultivate and secure annual fund gifts, major gifts and planned gifts from donors in an assigned geographic area.

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Goshen College is four-year liberal arts institution dedicated to the development of informed, articulate, sensitive and responsible Christians. More than 1,000 students are enrolled in campus and international programs. As a ministry of the Mennonite church, the institution seeks to integrate Christian values with educational and professional life. Education is viewed as a moral activity that produces servant leaders for the church and world.

Please send a letter of application, resumé and three professional or business letters of reference to Minerva Andriotis, Administrative Assistant for Human Resources, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526-4795; phone 574-535-7707; fax 574-535-7060; email hr@goshen.edu. Complete the online Personnel Information Form. Women and minority people are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite church. Administrative and teaching faculty members are expected to share this commitment.

The **Altona EMMC**, a congregation of 650 people, is looking for a ***full-time pastor of youth and education.*** This individual will have the responsibility of setting direction and vision for our youth programs. Other involvement will include resourcing education. Submit resumé and applications or questions to Karl Dreger, c/o Altona EMMC, Box 907, Altona, MB R0G 0B0. Email karldreger@hotmail.com; phone 204-324-8223.

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On Baptism: Mennonite-Catholic Theological Colloquium, 2001-2002, edited by Gerald W. Schlabach (Pandora Press, 2004, $14.50 Cdn.), records exchanges on the topic of baptism among 15 theologians and historians that began in 2001 under the auspices of the Mennonite-Catholic Theological Colloquium.

Just Policing: Mennonite-Catholic Theological Colloquium 2002, edited by Ivan J. Kauffman (Pandora Press, 2004, $14.50 Cdn.), is a concentrated conversation that takes its point of departure from Gerald Schlabach's reflections on the ethics of warfare and policing. Five theologians and historians contribute to this dialogue that took place in 2002 under the auspices of the Mennonite-Catholic Theological Colloquium.

The Formation of the Primitive Baptist Movement by Jeffrey Wayne Taylor (Pandora Press, 2004, $21.50) illustrates the interplay of religion and culture in 19th-century America. The Primitives contested attempts to create an unofficial established religion.

Nestor Makhno and the Eichenfeld Massacre: A Civil War Tragedy in a Ukrainian Mennonite Village, compiled, edited, translated and with an introduction and analysis by Harvey L. Dyck, John R. Staples and John B. Toews (Pandora Press, 2004, $14 Cdn.), tells the story of the nighttime massacre of 136 innocent Mennonites at Eichenfeld on Oct. 26-27, 1919, and elsewhere in the Nikolaipole volost during the years 1918-1920. It includes eyewitness accounts and reminiscences as well as an analysis of the origins and roots of the event and reflections on its legacy.

Peace in the Post-Christian Era by Thomas Merton (Orbis Books, 2004, $16) is published as a whole for the first time, even though it was written in 1961. Censors of Merton's order blocked publication of this work, but 42 years later, despite changing circumstances, when the "war on terrorism" has replaced the struggle against communism, his prophetic message remains eerily topical.

The Triumph of Eve and Other Subversive Bible Tales by Matt Biers-Ariel (SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2004, $19.99) fleshes out some of the most popular stories in the Bible.

The Hidden Gospel of Matthew: Annotated and Explained by Ron Miller (SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2004, $16.99) peels back centuries of cultural interpretation to show a fresh description of Christ as told by Matthew.

A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life by Parker J. Palmer (Jossey-Bass, 2004, $22.95) describes a form of community that fits the limits of our active lives. Palmer shows how "circles of trust" can help people find wholeness.

Land of Revelation: A Reconciling Presence in Israel by Roy H. Kreider (Herald Press, 2004, $19.99) recounts Roy and Florence Kreider's experience as mission workers in Israel beginning in 1953. It is a story of peacemaking and reconciliation.

Better Off: Flipping the Switch on Technology by Eric Brende (HarperCollins Publishers, 2004, $24.95) tells how he joined an obscure band of farmers in the Midwest, close relations with the Amish, whom he calls "Minimites." During an 18-month apprenticeship, Brende and his wife learned the benefits of living without electricity and much modern technology.

Whose Birthday Is It, Anyway? (Alternatives for Simple Living, 2004, $3) is now available in a gift edition, on an audio CD, as a set of radio programs and in Spanish. The booklet includes reflections, activities, a daily Advent calendar and suggestions for remembering the needy. Order from 800-821-6153, www.SimpleLiving.org.

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Gina and 45 million others need a change

Joseph Kotva

This monthly column, called ACHE (for Anabaptist Center for Healthcare Ethics), looks at issues of health-care ethics. If you have issues you want to see addressed, write Joseph Kotva, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517-1999, or jkotva@ambs.edu.

Gina is facing the possibilities of losing her house and declaring bankruptcy. Although she would not describe herself this way, Gina is among the working poor. She has worked in the textile industry since she was 18. She makes enough money to get by, but barely. There was always enough to pay the rent and buy groceries, clothes and even an occasional meal at McDonald's. But Gina's income never allowed for extras, such as cable television and magazine subscriptions, let alone such "luxuries" as health insurance. Life's opportunities provided Gina with a high school education.

Two years ago, at age 48, Gina bought her first home. With interest rates at near historic lows, she discovered that the monthly mortgage payments on a modest house were equal to what she was paying in rent. The folks at Gina's church were excited when they helped her move into the cute brick house near the center of town.

Unfortunately, 13 months ago, Gina broke her leg walking home from work. It was one of those freak events: She tripped over nothing in particular and landed awkwardly, breaking her leg. She was taken to the hospital where they set the bone, but there were complications over the next several weeks, requiring specialists and two surgeries.

Income lost from missed work and the lack of health insurance have left Gina in a financial crisis. She is behind on her mortgage, and the hospital is badgering her to start paying her mountain of medical debts. Gina is beside herself with anxiety. She is afraid she will lose her house. There is no way she can pay the hospital bill, even if they spread it over 10 years. The folks at church are sympathetic and want to help, but they cannot generate that much money. A lawyer acquaintance suggests that Gina consider bankruptcy—something she views as a humiliating sign of personal failure.

Gina's situation is not unique. Forty-five million people in the United States spent at least part of last year without health insurance. According to the Institute of Medicine's 2001 report, *Coverage Matters: Insurance and Health Care*, 80 pecent of the uninsured live in working families, and two-thirds live in families making less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level (that is, less than $37,000 for a family of four and less than $18,000 for a single person). Moreover, according to *Consumers Union* (Feb. 25), unreimbursed health-care costs contribute to half the nearly 1.6 million personal bankruptcies filed this past fiscal year. In other words, Gina's situation is more the norm than the exception. Lack of health insurance means that hard-working individuals and families are a health crisis away from financial ruin.

And personal financial ruin is but one example of the U.S. health-care crisis. We spend more per capita on health care than any industrialized nation, yet more than 20 countries do better than we do when comparing matters such as life expectancy and infant mortality. The uninsured are more likely to die prematurely: According to the Institute of Medicine's *Care Without Coverage*, 18,000 deaths per year are attributable to lack of insurance. And health care is now a major drag on the economy, with businesses of all sizes reporting reluctance to hire full-time employees due to expanding health-care costs (*New York Times*, Aug. 19).

Anabaptist Christians are morally obligated to lobby elected officials on behalf of major health-care reform.

I argued in last month's column that Anabaptist Christians can address the health-care crisis by focusing on local initiatives that provide better access for both our neighbors and our brothers and sisters in the church. While such local engagement must be part of our response to this crisis, it is not enough. Local initiatives and "safety-net providers" can only reach a minority of those without quality health insurance, and a recent study by *Health Services Research* (Vol. 39, No. 5) shows "that even when the uninsured live near a safety-net provider, there are still considerable disparities in their access to care compared with people with insurance." Local initiatives are not enough. The magnitude and complexity of the problem means that approaching a real solution will require significant federal government coordination and expenditure.

A national-level effort is needed, and Anabaptist Christians are morally obligated to lobby elected officials on behalf of major health-care reform. The important role of health and healing in the New Testament as signs of God's reign (Matthew 9:35; Luke 7:18-23), our concern for justice (Deuteronomy 16:20; Micah 6:8; Matthew 23:23) and love of neighbor (Matthew 22:39; Galatians 5:14), and our belief that Christ is finally Lord over all people and powers (Acts 10:36; Philippians 2:9-11; Colossians 1:16-20) compels us to speak to government on behalf of reform. To put it a different way, because we love the Ginas in our midst, we must call on government to enact real reform. What we might say to government about reform is the topic of our next column.

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The 10th leper

Gordon Houser

Giving thanks for the moment is the only way to glimpse eternity.—Spanish meditation

When we can be present in whatever we do, we will experience a deeper awareness of God's presence.

In the darkness of our world, the story of Jesus healing 10 lepers (Luke 17: 11-19) offers a lesson about gratitude that can help us be faithful disciples over the long haul by living in each moment.

Jesus heals 10, but only one returns to offer thanks. Luke makes the point that this one is "a Samaritan," someone looked down on by Jews. Even Jesus calls him "this foreigner." Yet this outsider becomes an example for us to follow.

Notice that Jesus does not commend him for giving thanks. He says, "Your faith has made you well." We tend to equate faith ("pistis" in Greek) with belief or will power. However, as John E. Toews points out in his commentary on Romans (Herald Press, 2004), it can carry a more active meaning of faithfulness. Another term for this is showing up, which is exactly what this leper did.

Giving thanks, this leper teaches us, is being faithful; it's showing up each moment. We have trouble being thankful when we fail to pay attention. Perhaps being an outsider helped this leper see better than the other nine.

David Steindl-Rast, author of *Gratefulness: The Heart of Prayer*, writes about the importance of surprise. Surprises may appear good or bad, but they often wake us up. (Notice how your eyes get wider when you're surprised.) And they can lead us to gratitude.

He quotes Alice Walker: "Expect nothing. Live frugally on surprise." For example, the next time you get in your car, don't expect it to start when you turn the key. When it does, you can be surprised by such a marvel of technology and be grateful it works.

Our bodies can be a source of great surprise. Your body produces and destroys 15 million red blood cells every second. If you line up the blood vessels in your body end to end, it would reach around the world, yet your heart pumps blood through that network and back again in only a minute. And it keeps pumping away at 100,000 heartbeats every 24 hours. That's something to be grateful for. Your eyes are 100,000 times more sensitive to candlelight than to sunlight. Your stomach has 35 million digestive glands. No wonder the Psalmist cried out, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14).

Psychologist Robert Emmons writes about the growing research showing both the psychological and physical benefits of gratitude. For example, three groups kept journals: one recorded what they were thankful for each day, another wrote down daily hassles, the third recorded neutral events. The gratitude group exercised more regularly, reported fewer physical symptoms, felt better about their lives as a whole and were more optimistic about the upcoming week than the other groups. They were also more likely to report helping someone with a personal problem or offering emotional support to another.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18, Paul says to "pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." Christians have spent centuries reflecting on the meaning of these verses and how to practice them.

Here's one humble approach. We are called to live in the present moment and in that moment to live in the awareness of God's presence. (That does not mean thinking about God all the time, as if God can be captured by thought anyway.) If you're like me, this is difficult. My mind wants to wander into the future or the past, think about things I want to get done or regret things I have or haven't done.

Whatever you're doing, do it with full attention. Whether you're washing dishes, drawing up architectural plans, pounding a nail, eating, sleeping or nothing at all, be present in that act. Children are great teachers. Watch them play. They give their full attention to what they are doing.

This feels difficult to our fast-paced, multitasking selves, and it takes much practice to let go of all the things that want to take our awareness away from the present. But when we can be present in whatever we do, we will experience a deeper awareness of God's presence. This helps us through the long haul by being a no-haul, a letting go, a resting in thankfulness, the heart of prayer. Give thanks for right now, this moment, and glimpse eternity.

The 10th leper shows us how to be made well. He shows up at Jesus' feet and offers thanks and praise to God. We can do likewise.—*gh*

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Life is too short to go it alone

Clarence E. Rempel is a pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

When 17-year-old Kaely Miller said, "I grew up in a Christian home and therefore grew up never knowing God," my mental and spiritual faculties went on high alert. She was describing what it was like to try to do life on her own. About 100 of us had gathered at a lake for the baptisms of two young people, but first we wanted to hear their spiritual stories.

"Sure, I knew about [God]," Kaely said. "I was taught his stories and I was told he loved me, but I had no real connection with him. It was like when you put ice on a sore; you eventually become numb. Becoming numb with God was one of my biggest difficulties. I didn't seriously think about God until three years ago, until I had nowhere else to go. Even then, even when I was the most desperate, I tried replacing God by using my youth group, mentors and youth pastor."

Kaely went on: "I didn't want to rely on a God I thought had ignored me for years, who I thought had turned his back on me when I needed him the most. So I ran from him by pretending I was OK, that I didn't ever need him, that I could live on my own. Then the ice was taken off the sore. My numbness faded, and I was faced with hurt and anger. I was lost. … Who was God really? What good was I to him? Why did I have to love him?"

As I reflected on Kaely's story, I heard echoes of Jesus' kingdom blessings. "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matthew 5:3). Blessed are those who realize the emptiness and neediness of their lives and are willing to confess it.

Kaely continued: "I always thought I would be baptized when I was strong and sure of my faith, when I didn't need help with anything in my life, when I wasn't broken. By those means, I would never be baptized. I'm a broken person and I always will be. But I know now that I'd rather be broken than not. When I was sure of myself there was no need for the help and support of Christ's body. And the truth is, I need God no matter what's going on in my life."

"Blessed are those who mourn" (Matthew 5:4). Blessed are those who grieve the brokenness of their lives.

Kaely grieved the brokenness of family relationships: "I've been a difficult daughter. While I became more outspoken in the community, I became more secretive at home. I led two separate lives, one where I was seeking help from those around me and one where I was fine and didn't need any help, especially not from my family. It's been hard and continues to be hard to let myself be emotional with those closest to me. I've ignored my parents. I've hurt them. … I've abused their forgiving nature, their trust and most of all their love. I built a wall around myself to stop my parents from intruding, much like the wall I build around myself to keep God at a distance."

"Blessed are the meek" (Matthew 5:5). Blessed are the God-dependent. Blessed are those who know life is too short to go it alone.

"I need God no matter what's going on in my life. I need his love, his mercy, his strength and his compassion. … After realizing the depth of God's love, I knew my next step was to take the plunge of baptism."

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

Kaely summed up her God-hunger with the lyrics of a favorite song: "I asked myself, Do you know what you are getting yourself into? I'm getting into You, because You got to me in a way words can't describe. I'm getting into You because I've got to be. You're essential to survive. I will love You with my life."

We baptized Kaely Miller on July 7 in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Life is too short to go it alone.

TheMennonite

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. —*Editors*

Alternatives are unsatisfactory

Perhaps a further word is in order regarding the news item "North Central Sets Plans to Study Affiliation" (News Digest, Nov. 2). The wording of the article may have given the impression that North Central Conference (NCC) has just now taken up the issue of affiliation with Mennonite Church USA. In fact, our executive committee has dealt extensively with the issue of our involvement in Mennonite Church USA since January 2001, including receiving the counsel of the delegate body on several occasions.

In January 2002 we committed NCC to support the Executive Board in a first-fruits-giving plan. Since then, the NCC executive committee has discussed joining Mennonite Church USA at length—with considerable depth and frankness of discussion. We have looked at several other possible alternatives, all of which seemed fairly unsatisfactory. We have come to the place as a committee, with significant movement on some people's part, that we would endorse North Central Conference joining Mennonite Church USA. This is the strong, near-unanimous sentiment of the committee, although not without some concerns. We stopped short of making it a formal recommendation.

The documents for congregational study will advocate an approach similar to that taken by Lancaster and Franklin conferences, holding the congregation/conference link as primary and presenting the amount of activity/participation in Mennonite Church USA as optional.—*Galen Kauffman, moderator, North Central Conference*

Why Muslims despise us

While Everett J. Thomas' Nov. 2 editorial ("James and John as Terrorists") presents a clear call to take a Christ-like attitude toward "terrorists," it is much less clear about Muslims' reasons for despising American Christians.

With an "eye for an eye" mindset with which many Muslims and many Christians operate, we should not be surprised that hatred abounds. In addition, many Christians see the political-military triumph of modern Israel as the fulfillment of Bible prophecy, so that all the injustices of Israel against which despairing Palestinians retaliate are justified, since they believe these actions pave the way for Christ's return. Our political leaders and the news media often say other people hate us "because we stand for freedom" or "because we are Christian." The real reasons stand much more concretely in our country's past actions.

As for Bible prophecy, we might remember that "prophet" means "one who speaks for God" and that the prophet's main role is to speak moral truth, not just to foretell the future. Neither Israel nor Palestine nor the United States nor any other country should be exempted from Micah's call to "do justly and love mercy."—*Ray Elvin Horst, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Mourning for Margaret Hassan

I join with many Iraqi citizens and international aid workers in lamenting the death of Margaret Hassan in Iraq. She was the "Mother Theresa" of Iraq. As a friend and colleague, I saw her gentle spirit at work in the dusty streets of Baghdad, giving out a cup of cold water, a warm meal, a school kit from Mennonite Central Committee, blankets from Europe, hospital equipment from Britian, etc. She never was one wanting to talk politics.

"It's my people, Kevin. It's my people," she would say to me.

I pray that all of this senseless violence cease. May God grant all of us mercy.—*Kevin King, Mennonite Disaster Service, Akron, Pa.*

Benefiting from violent power

As a non-Mennonite reader of *The Mennonite*, I feel compelled to respond to Ted Grimsrud's "Anabaptist Faith and American Democracy" (Oct 5). In addition to having misunderstood Ted Koontz' "two languages" metaphor—which advocates not withdrawal for Christians but selective, positive participation in the civic life of any nation-state, shaped by Jesus' life, teachings and resurrection—Grimsrud seems to have misread the dynamics of the history and current civic life of the United States.

It is impossible to separate the "first America" from the "second America." The benevolent nature of the "first America," whose benefits I have amply enjoyed, depends and always has depended upon the violent power of the second America. Any dis-

IN THIS ISSUE

An oratorio is a lengthy musical piece and often tells a story through words rather than with actions and scenery. Our cover story (page 8) suggests that Christmas is a cosmic oratorio—one in which the music comes from Mary, Elizabeth, angels, shepherds and, finally, us. "Mary's song becomes our song when we see the cosmic reconfiguration of all things," says David Boshart, "as God's kingdom comes and God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven." Ken Gibble (page 12) asks whether we need Christmas and then reminds us that God entered fully and freely into the joy and pain of the human condition. Another element of the Christmas season is Epiphany, celebrated each year on Jan. 6 to mark the revelation of God's salvation for the Gentiles. Marlene Kropf (page 18) asks, Who will celebrate Epiphany with us? Connected with Epiphany is the story of Jesus' dedication in the temple, and the editorial (page 32) reviews the wonderful stories of Simeon and Anna.—*Editors* cerning participation in the civic life of the USA cannot ignore this reality. If, as Grimsrud rightly suggests, Jeremiah's word to "seek the welfare of the city to which I have sent you in exile" can be read by Christians as a call to "discerning participation" in the civic life of our nation, it would be well for us to begin our discernment by asking what actions Jeremiah defines as the seeking of welfare.

I read Jeremiah 29:1-14 as a direction to build houses in Babylon, plant gardens and eat of the produce, marry there and have children, and to "pray to the Lord on its behalf." Although the passage does not forbid involvement in governmental institutions, it certainly does not offer us an easy warrant for such involvement.—*Diane Stone, Springport, Mich.*

Greatest job in the world

A big thank you to Ryan Ahlgrim for "The Greatest Job in the World" (Oct. 19), to which I say amen after serving in the pastorate and missionary work for 51 years. Here are two more reasons that cause people not to enter the Christian ministry: First, the level of Christian discipleship in many churches is lower than what some pastors imagine, and church members don't engage in making disciples, essentially because modern-day disciples don't love the Lord with all their heart, soul and mind. They talk about low salaries and being too busy and that evangelization is hard work. Those who talk that way need to return to their first love and be filled once again with the power of the Holy Spirit. Second, some of those who would enter the ministry haven't been encouraged by the example set by their pastor because the pastor does not live with a radical Anabaptist style of Christian service.

May all of us who serve in the ministry continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. And may those who hear the quiet voice of the Lord calling them into service, rise and take up the cross and follow him, whatever the cost may be.—*Mario Snyder, Buenos Aires, Argentina*

Left Behind

The article by Ted Lewis ("Noah Was Left Behind," Nov. 16) is another regurgitation of spiritual drivel. Why do these false teachings continue to circulate and some editors continue to publish them?

Lewis says, "The idea of believers being rescued out of the world prior to this intensification (tribulation) only dates back to the 1820s and the 1830s in Great Britain." Perhaps he should know that Ephraem was a major theologian of the early Byzantine Eastern Church, and he wrote, "For all the saints and the Elect of God are gathered, prior to the Tribulation that is to come, and are taken to the Lord lest they see the confusion that is to overwhelm the world because of our sins." This was published in A.D. 373.

Perhaps Lewis still doesn't think this is early enough in the history of the church. Then he should read, "The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians," dated A.D. 68. He should read the "The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians" (Polycarp lived A.D 69-155). He should also read William Tyndale's New Testament translation dated in A.D. 1534.

All these scholars and more agree with the apostle Paul's teaching in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3. Tyndale and many other excellent Greek scholars accurately translate this passage using the words "except there come a departing first." This Scripture is meant to comfort the true saints of the Lord. But the grossly corrupted New International Version paraphrases this Scripture with the words, "that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed."

Maybe the Lord does have a purpose in allowing these corrupted Scriptures to be read by the masses of lukewarm Christians: They are in rebellion and will continue to be in rebellion against the truth of God's Word. They are the ones that may be "left behind."—*Charles D. Landis, Lancaster, Pa.*

Thank you for the excellent article by Ted Lewis ("Noah Was Left Behind"). He does an excellent job of cutting through the popular cultural expressions of a particular end-times theology and pointing out the inconsistencies of that theology within the larger pattern of Scripture. At the same time, he does it in a way that is easily accessible to the reader.—*Michael Danner, Metamora, Ill.*

Thanks for Mediaculture

We appreciate Gordon Houser's Mediaculture column. How wonderful to consult it to learn about films we wouldn't find elsewhere. As Wim Wenders fans, we hope to find a way to see his newest movie. Thanks, Gordon, for sharing the view from your lens.—*Joel Ewy and Beverly Baumgartner, Newton, Kan.*

War is wrong

War is terribly wrong. War is killing people we don't know. War makes orphans, fills our hospitals and mental institutions, destroys property and innocent people. War-mongers and people thirsty for power create propaganda filled with hatred and untruths or half-truths, incidents are blown out of proportion. Why can't we talk over our differences? It would make more sense to try to get along despite our personal opinions and dislikes—it sure would be cheaper, and families could still be a family.—*Etril J. Leinbach, Goshen, Ind.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

The *Left Behind* books are popular with many Christians:

- ○ I have read at least one of them and like them (20%)
- ○ I have read at least one of them and do not like them (11%)
- ○ I have not read any *Left Behind* books (60%)
- ○ What are *Left Behind* books? (10%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

In the Sept. 7 issue we noted that we would publish letters about the U.S. presidential election if space allowed. Space does not permit us to print letters we received recently about the election and the election-related articles.—*Editor*

IN BRIEF

Goshen appoints search committee

The Goshen (Ind.) College Board of Directors has assembled a presidential search committee that includes board members, alumni, professors, pastors and church and educational leaders. The Mennonite Education Agency Board of Directors affirmed the appointees. Appointed with board vice chair Rick Stiffney and MEA executive director Carlos Romero were Miriam Book, James E. Brenneman, Howard Brenneman, Victor Koop, Kathryn Meyer Reimer, Aveani K. Moelijono, Arturo Montoya, Connie Stauffer and Rebecca Stoltzfus. *—Goshen College News Service*

Apologies accepted

The father of Nicholas Berg, a 26-year-old businessman beheaded in Iraq by Islamic militants, says that letters of condolence and apology from Muslims have helped him grieve his loss and that he wants to reciprocate. He now supports the Iraq Photo Project, sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, which sends photos to Iraq of ordinary Americans holding handwritten signs apologizing for the U.S. invasion and occupation. A slideshow of the photos is at www.forusa.org. *—National Catholic Reporter*

Cheyenne leader Joe Walks Along Sr. dies

LAME DEER, Mont.—Joe Walks Along Sr., a Northern Cheyenne leader and pastor of Lame Deer Mennonite Church, died Dec. 1. He was 73.

Joe Walks Along Sr.

Raised in a traditional Cheyenne home among his elders and extended family, he was a great-grandson of Strong Left Hand, who helped protect the Northern Cheyenne as they moved from Oklahoma Territory to Montana in 1877-78. His grandfather, Yellow Robe, and his father, Hugh Walks Along, also influenced Joe in his early years.

Walks Along served in the U.S. Army in Korea. In his public testimonies he told of his struggle with alcohol following his discharge from the Army and how his decision to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior changed his life.

He married Victoria Long Jaw in 1955, and they raised eight children. He was ordained to the ministry in 1961. He attended the 1967 Mennonite World Conference in the Netherlands, where he spoke. He also shared his message in Canada, Mexico and Guatemala.

Walks Along also served on the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council and advocated for the preservation of Native languages and culture, tribal sovereignty, improved health care, honesty in government, economic development and the preservation of the Northern Cheyenne homeland. He also operated a cattle ranch.*—Willis Busenitz*

Two Vietnamese Mennonites released

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam—Two of the six imprisoned Mennonite Church personnel have been released from the city's Chi Hoa prison after completing their sentences.

Nguyen Hieu Nghia, deacon of the Mennonite congregation in Ho Chi Minh City's Second District, was released on Dec. 2. His evangelist brother, Nguyen Thanh Nhan, was released the following day. After receiving physical examinations Dec. 4, they went to their parents' home near Rach Gia in the southwest province of Kien Giang. They planned to return to Ho Chi Minh City for medical examinations and treatment on Dec. 11.

Nghia, 24, was the first person arrested in the March 2 incident at the Mennonite house church center. Nhan, 22, was detained by police when he went with others to inquire about reports that Nghia was being beaten while in police custody.

Both Nhan and Nghia reported they were beaten during interrogations. At the trial in the city's court on Nov. 12, the brothers were sentenced to nine months imprisonment, basically the time they had already served.*—MWC News Service*

MMA assists small businesses with investments

In his village near Peru's highest mountain, Claudio Galan spi and weaves fabric in traditional colors and patterns. The han made cloth is considered too expensive to locals who are mo likely to dress in imported jeans and sweatshirts than traditio al garb. MMA recently made its single largest round of investments, $2.8 million, to support this type of local financial ass tance for small business development and similar communit development projects.*—MMA*

First employee at Mennonite Media dies

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Mildred Graybill Tillman, the first paid employee of a then-fledgling Mennonite radio program, died Nov. 23 in Easton, Pa.

Tillman, hired by Mennonite Broadcasts, Inc. in 1952, played a significant role in the early development of the Mennonite Hour—first as a volunteer administrative assistant, and then as its first paid employee. She was secretary for B. Charles Hostetter, volunteer speaker on the program, who worked at that time as student pastor of Eastern Mennonite College.

Tillman worked for Mennonite Broadcasts Inc. from 1952 through 1970; during those years, it became the official media outreach program of the Mennonite Board of Missions for the Mennonite Church, a predecessor agency of Mennonite Mission Network. Eventually Tillman became an accountant.

She is survived by her husband, David, a stepson, Darek of Phoenix, Ariz., two sisters and two grandchildren. Services were held Nov. 29 in Bethlehem, Pa.*—Mennonite Mission Network*

Byler licensed to ministry with denomination

GOSHEN, Ind.—Ron Byler has searched for where his deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet. He's found that place in serving as associate executive director for Mennonite Church USA.

Ron Byler

That idea that we serve God most fully when we use our gifts with joy shaped the worship service Nov. 14 at Eighth Street Mennonite Church in Goshen. Lloyd Miller, Central District Conference minister, led in licensing Byler for Mennonite Church USA leadership ministries. Eighth Street first became church family for Byler, his wife, Mim Shirk, and their son Jesse in 1985, and then again in 1997, when they moved back to Goshen from Philadelphia.

The former Mennonite Church General Board called him to become associate general secretary in 1997, after which he also served as a member of the Transformation Team that navigated the transformation from the former General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church into Mennonite Church USA. In 2001, after the new denomination began, he assumed his current role.

In this ministry, he serves as staff person for Executive Leadership and supervises its ministries. They include congregational and ministerial leadership, intercultural relations, convention planning, administration, communications, historical committee and peace and justice. He is also the staff person for the churchwide leadership discernment committee, and supervises special projects such as the annual directory and biennial delegate assembly.—*Mennonite Church USA News Service*

vartley, Martens honored for Bible commentary work

om left, Mary and Willard Swartley of Elkhart, Ind., and Elmer
d Phyllis Martens of Fresno, Calif., were honored at the annual
eetings of the Believers Church Bible Commentaries Series in
n Antonio, Texas. Swartley edited nine New Testament volumes
the series and Martens eight Old Testament volumes, as well as
riting one himself.—*Mennonite Publishing Network*

Oh deer, there's blood in the sanctuary

WARSAW, Ind.—When Angela Smith, hospitality chair of Mennonite Church of Warsaw, entered the church building one Tuesday morning last month, she found blood spattered on the walls, floor and furniture, shattered glass, a broken window and the church's copier damaged. Finally she entered the sanctuary, where lay a dead deer.

The animal had severed its jugular vein when it leaped through the window sometime in the night, landing on the copy machine.

The church had been praying for a new copier, new carpeting and an interior paint job. Now it appears the insurance company will pay for everything.—*Wesley Smith,* Gospel Evangel

Hesston College students fast for AIDS relief

HESSTON, Kan.—A total of 142 Hesston College students skipped two meals at the college's cafeteria on World AIDS day, Dec. 1, to raise money for Generations at Risk, Mennonite Central Committee's HIV/AIDS program. The $1,100 generated has been designated to pay shipping costs for AIDS care kits assembled by churches and individuals in the United States and Canada. Generations at Risk addresses the growing HIV/AIDS crisis that affects 40 million people worldwide.

Student organizer Lindsay Rheinheimer, a Monument, Colo., sophomore, says students found it easy to participate in the program offered by the Peace and Service Club. "In many programs, we're asked to volunteer time or give money," she says. "Here, we could give money by skipping lunch and dinner without actually having to pay."—*Hesston College News Service*

EMU adds prelaw minor to curriculum

HARRISONBURG, Va.—For students considering law school or law-related vocations, one path to achieving that goal may now run through Eastern Mennonite University.

EMU's board of trustees has approved a university proposal to add a prelaw minor to the curriculum, effective with the 2005-2006 academic year.

Daniel W. Wessner, associate professor of international and political studies, says the program will draw on the strengths of EMU's emphases on service, cross-cultural understanding, international concerns, and justice, peace and conflict studies—all grounded in a Christian faith informed by Anabaptist-Mennonite beliefs.—*EMU News Service*

IN BRIEF

Electronic waste

E-waste is the fastest growing component of U.S. municipal waste streams. By 2006, an estimated 163,000 computers and televisions will become obsolete every day in the United States, amounting to almost 3,513 tons of waste. Electronics are laden with toxic substances, including brominated fire retardants, cadmium, lead and mercury. The United States ships 50 to 80 percent of its e-waste to the developing world, where regulations are lax, and workers and the environment are often exposed to toxins. A Maine law, to take effect in 2006, will make manufacturers responsible for recycling their products.—*Yes!*

More homeless are women, older

The nation's rescue missions are serving more women and an older clientele, a new survey by the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions shows. In 2004, 23 percent of clients were women, compared with 18 percent in 1994. The 15th annual survey involved 20,500 individuals. It also showed that clients are older. In 1994, half were under age 35, and in 2004, nearly two-thirds are age 36 or older. The survey also found that 62 percent have been homeless less than a year, and 35 percent had never been homeless before.—*National Catholic Reporter*

the cosmic oratorio

A reflection on Luke 1:26-56

By David W. Boshart

What if Mary had said no? What would Gabriel have done? Would he have kept moving down the block asking single girls if they were willing to become pregnant before marriage until he got one that said yes? I wonder what it was like for Gabriel to travel to Mary's house knowing he was carrying a message that would change the world.

Gabriel came to Mary with an extraordinary proposal: The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the most high will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called the Son of God. His name will be Jesus—Savior."

Preacher Herbert O'Driscoll recalls an old Irish tale that says when the angel asked Mary if she would bear the holy child, all the stars and the sun and the moon stopped moving until she gave Gabriel her reply. And when she said yes, they all started moving again (*The Christian Century*, December 13, 2003).

That story makes me wonder what was going on between earth and heaven when Gabriel sprang the question and waited for Mary's response. Her yes wasn't instant. She was perplexed, "How can this be? It's impossible." Finally she says, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." I think Gabriel and all the universe let out a great sigh of relief. God's great plan to redeem the world would now move forward. And out of that pregnant pause came singing.

Gabriel and all the universe let out a great sigh of relief. God's great plan to redeem the world would now move forward. And out of that pregnant pause came singing.

The time from Gabriel's visit until Jesus is born is spent singing—at least for those in on this great cosmic secret. Elizabeth sings, Mary sings, Zechariah sings. Elizabeth sings a song of blessing when Mary arrives to visit. For many years Elizabeth had to endure being happy for young women who became pregnant, while she remained barren. Finally, old Elizabeth, the crone, six months pregnant in all her swollen glory, gets to join another pregnant woman and delight in the life that has been conceived within. Elizabeth blesses all over the place.

Mary's joy: Ecstatic Elizabeth says, "Blessed are you, Mary, God has turned toward you." Even the child in her womb dances a jig with the stars and the moon as Elizabeth sings her blessing to Mary. Elizabeth invites Mary's joy. Perhaps this is the only place Mary can share it. Even Joseph wants to keep it quiet and make it go away. But when Mary comes to Elizabeth's home, no more whispering. Because Mary was willing, God turned toward the world.

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

Mary sings, and her song is not a solo. In Mary's song we hear the choir of all creation yearning for the day when God will make a way where there is no way. Mary is in a mess, yet she sings. We might expect anyone in Mary's situation to be singing the blues: "Woe is me, my life is ruined. All I know is that when I left, Joseph said, 'It is over.'" But her song is not a lament about her own dubious destiny. Mary sings a song of freedom on behalf of all the faithful poor in the land. Mary bursts forth in a magnanimous song on behalf of all those who know the harshness of a fallen world best. Mary sings for those who fear God, those who have no one pulling for them: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. For he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely from now on all generations shall call me blessed."

Mary sees things no one else has, save Elizabeth. Mary's song has great vision. Mary sees things not as they are but as they will be. Mary knows the Lord's prayer even before our Lord is old enough to speak it. Mary is singing about how things look when God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

> **Mary's song becomes our song when we attend to the silent spaces, the pregnant pauses, the proposals from God to fold ourselves into his redemptive work in the world.**

As we hear Mary's song, we are sobered for whom Mary is not singing. Mary does not sing for the rich and the proud, who are sent away empty. The rich have so much to defend, more money to make. Time is money, and money is time. The rich cannot afford to stand still long enough for the in-breaking of God's great plan to redeem creation. Mary offers a song for anyone who needs a reason to hope. Out of the night sky comes a song that says, "We are all blessed because God as turned toward us."

Anyone who has sung in a choir knows that attending to moments of silence is as important as the sound of the music. There are moments of silence in Mary's song as well. Having traveled to Elizabeth's house in great haste, breaking out in the Magnificat, Mary stops and waits. It appears from the Gospel accounts that Mary is silent for the next 12 years, until Jesus hides out at the temple. Why doesn't Mary speak? Because she knows. She sang the overture to the cosmic oratorio of redemption. The choir of the heavenly host will next pick up their part, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those whom he favors." Whom does God favor? Mary has told us in her song.

Then the shepherds pick up the song. They tell Mary and Joseph what they saw out in the pastures. They leave Mary and Joseph and return, "glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen." Later in Matthew's Gospel, the Magi sing. When they see a star stopping in the sky, they are overwhelmed with exceeding great joy. They come in and they worship.

Mary's silence: Mary can be silent because she no longer sings alone. The song of the redemption of the world is being sung in heaven, by lowly shepherds, by the nations. Mary is silent as she watches her song spreading throughout the land. She knows what the hand of God is doing. In this child she has borne into the world, God has turned toward his fallen creation and is bringing about the redemption of the world.

If silence is as much about the music as sound, let us pause and consider our part in this great cosmic oratorio. When Mary said yes, the course of history took a right turn. Now, because Jesus has come, history is moving with certainty toward the redemption of all things. How does Mary's song become our song?

Mary's song will become our song when we like the shepherds come to the manger and contemplate this Savior's humble beginnings. At the manger we are reminded that it is God who is bringing about the redemption of the world. In the preposterous proposal that an unwed girl become pregnant with the Son of God there can be no doubt that the way being made is God's doing and no one else's. Mary's song becomes our song when we see the cosmic reconfiguration of all things as God's kingdom comes and God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven. The song of the cosmos tells us that there will be enough for everyone in God's economy. Mary's song becomes our song when we attend to the silent spaces, the pregnant pauses, the proposals from God to fold ourselves into his redemptive work in the world.

When we are silent, we hear God's invitation to be receptacles of his divine seed, which wants to take root in the world. In pregnant pauses we attend to how God's reign is coming in our midst. Mary's song becomes our song when out of our silent moments we sing a song that does not trivialize or minimize the reach and strength of God's redemption

The song of Mary proclaims that in the coming of Jesus God is upsetting the order of a fallen creation for the sake of his glory and our healing. When we contemplate God's call in our lives, the sun and moon and the stars stop, and the universe holds its breath and waits to see if we will accept God's proposal to receive Jesus and pick up our part in the great cosmic oratorio. "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those whom he has favored." TM

David W. Boshart is pastor of West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

Small night song from Oneonta

by Jeff Gundy

It's good that the world has more beauty
than it needs. It's good to walk into
the smooth Catskill night and discover

that the night has no edges, no sympathy,
no grievance against me, that any place I step
will hold me firm, not like a lover,

not like a child. It's good to be a child,
and then for years to be something else,
and then something else. It's a hard world

but the rain is persistent, the deer
are quiet and discreet, and for ages now
the trees have known how to dream their way up.

A man with a pack on his shoulder
saunters down the path below me, knowing
the lights he sees ahead are burning for him.

Jeff Gundy is professor of English and faculty scholar at Bluffton (Ohio) University. His new book of poems is Deerflies (WordTech Editions).

Do you need

Christianity makes th

by Ken Gibble

Do you need Christmas? is an odd question, isn't it? Notice I didn't ask, Do you like Christmas? And I didn't ask the question so often asked at this time of year, Are you ready for Christmas? I asked, Do you need Christmas?

I think you do. You need Christmas in order to see and understand and appreciate what it means to be fully human.

But please understand that by "Christmas" I'm not referring to the North American version of Christmas.

Almost everyone moans about the stores setting up their Christmas displays in October. It's a common complaint that Christmas involves too much rushing around, too many presents costing too many dollars. Christmas in our country equals big bucks; but that isn't what I'm talking about.

What bothers me is the trivialization of Christmas.

Take, for instance, the music. Undeniably the most beautiful music belongs to this season of the year. Think of the loveliness of "Silent Night," the majesty of "Adeste Fideles," the compelling and complex imagery of "The Holly and the Ivy." No other collection of words and melody equals the songs of Christmas. But when they seep into our ears from every audio system in every store, elevator and office, they lose their beauty. They are reduced to the commonplace, the trivial. They are taken away from us.

Our need for Christmas has almost nothing to do with the trivialized version of the season. It has everything to do with a simple story that goes back two millennia.

Our need for Christmas has almost nothing to do with the trivialized version of the season. It has everything to do with a simple story that goes back two millennia.

In that story we learn something essential about Christianity. We learn that Christianity is not a philosophy of life or a legal code or even a mystical, spiritual revelation. In Christmas we see that the whole thing rests on a person. Christianity makes the astounding claim that God comes to us in the person of Jesus; he comes breathing, eating, talking, touching. God meets us face-to-face, person-to-person. The theological word for it is incarnation. The best word for it is love.

Wet, messy arrival: In the Christmas story there are angels appearing to Mary and Joseph, there are heavenly choirs and a mysterious star. But these are all the trappings, the extras added for poetic or other effect. The essence of the whole thing is a baby, a flesh and blood child born like every other child, with the mother gasping for breath as she painfully pushes the infant into the world, its wet, messy arrival accompanied by squalls loud enough to hurt your ears and melt your heart.

No one would have guessed God would come to earth this way, despite what the Hebrew prophets had said. Micah foretold that Bethlehem, a little village, would be the birthplace of Israel's king. But nobody was paying much attention to what Micah said. And anyone who might have peered into the stable that night and seen the child lying in the cattle's feed trough would not have guessed in a million years that this was the Savior of the world. There was nothing grand about the birth of Mary's son.

But if there was nothing grand about his birth, there was something intensely human about it. And that is the important thing. For in this birth, the ineffable God, the One whose being spans galaxies of galaxies that we have not yet begun to measure, this mighty God willingly and graciously entered into intimate relationship with humanity.

Christmas is about relationships—God's reaching out to us, our reaching out to each other. We send out our Christmas cards by the millions with a silent longing to be in touch with those whose stories have interwoven with our own. And between the neatly printed lines of verse are unwritten questions: Do you still remember me? Are you still there? Still my friend? Do you still care?

To enter a relationship with another is to make oneself vulnerable, and God took that risk, too. The child in Bethlehem grew up to walk the path of obedience all the way to a criminal's death. That's why in the Christmas story the flickering lantern that lights the dark stable walls in Bethlehem casts shadows that form themselves into a cross.

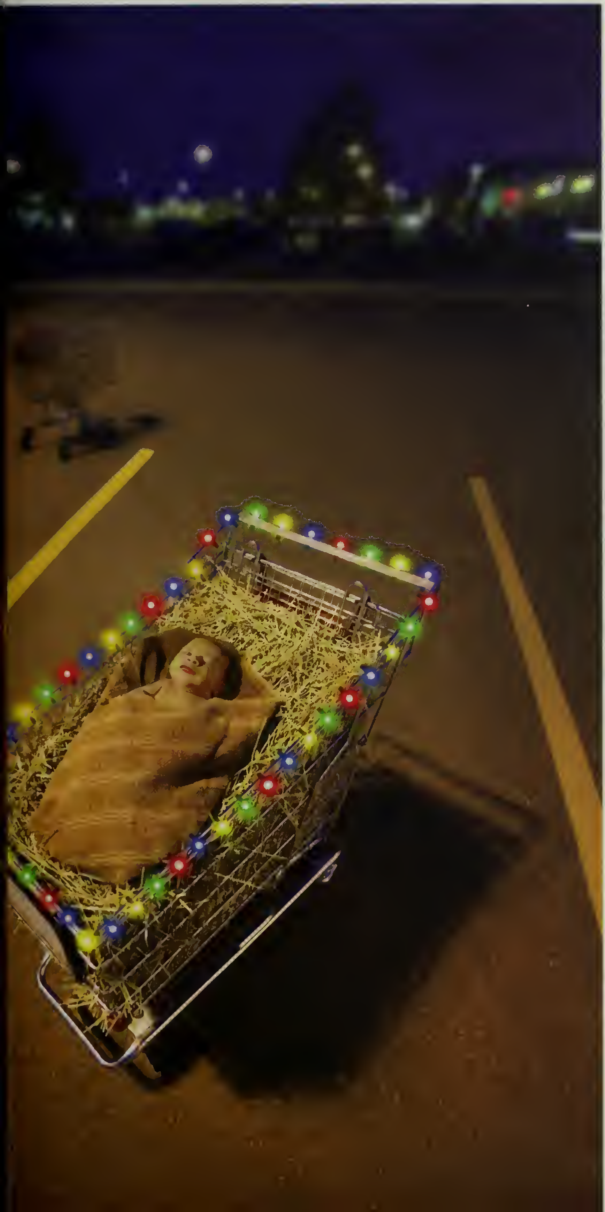
In the centuries-old carol "The First Good Joy That Mary Had," the mother of the Christ child names her Christmas joys one by one, until abruptly there comes a joy that sounds strange to us:

"The next good joy that Mary had
It was the joy of six:

DesignPics

Christmas?

stounding claim that God comes to us in the person of Jesus.



To see her own son Jesus Christ
Upon the Crucifix.”

The joy and pain of the human condition: And when those words catch us up short, as they are intended to, we suddenly see why so few people ever find in Christmas anything more than an occasion for perfunctory gift-giving and a few more-or-less enjoyable parties. You see, to let Christmas truly touch us, we must enter the joy and pain of the human condition, a condition into which God entered fully and freely.

At Christmas we see and feel the subtle interplay between the divine and human as at no other time. And despite the holiday advertising blitz, despite the determined efforts of so many people to turn Christmas into triviality, there is something about it that makes even the most hardened cynics among us pause for a moment.

To enter a relationship with another is to make oneself vulnerable, and God took that risk, too.

It may be a glimpse of a candle burning in a window or the night-time echoes of “Joy to the World” played by a brass ensemble or even someone’s firm handclasp and direct gaze accompanied by the worn greeting “Merry Christmas.” And the message is there—that God comes into such a world as this, comes to stand with us and laugh with us and suffer with us. Yes, even to suffer with us—whether the pain be a hunger for food to fill empty bellies or hope to fill empty hearts.

The carol says, “Of all the trees that are in the wood, the holly bears the crown.” And we know now what crown it is, a crown of thorns, and we know humanity still wears it, and we know the one who, crucified, bore it on his head for us and with us—all because of love.

For that is the truth of the Christian faith, just as it is the truth of Christmas—love. It is as unsentimental and as strong and as human a message of redemption and hope as the world has ever known.

And it’s why I still need Christmas, and so do you, and so does this weary, weary world.

Ken Gibble is a Church of the Brethren writer and lives in Greencastle, Pa.

Disciples like Jesus

by Douglas Kaufman

The Gospels are filled with descriptions of the prayer life of Jesus. The Gospel of Luke in particular talks about the many times Jesus leaves behind the crowds and disciples so that he can pray alone. Jesus prayed a lot, yet we have few examples of what Jesus actually prayed. The main exceptions are the Lord's Prayer and the prayers at Gethsemane and the cross. John 17 is one of those rare occasions where we are privileged to hear the prayers of Jesus. This is by far the longest prayer of Jesus we have.

The prayer begins with Jesus praying about his relationship with God. The middle section, John 17:6-19, is a prayer for the disciples of Jesus, those following him as he prepares to die, and the final section is a prayer for those who will come after the original disciples, those who believe in Jesus based on what the original disciples say about him. This part of the prayer includes us.

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If Jesus is from God, then Jesus' followers will find God through him. This is the basis of the mission of Jesus.

Two times in this prayer Jesus asks for unity. In v. 11 he asks God that the disciples gathered around him may be one, "as we are one." This is also the first request Jesus makes for the disciples who will follow later. In vv. 20-21, Jesus says, "I ask not only on behalf of these but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

In both cases the unity of the disciples is based on the unity of Jesus and the Father. Just as Jesus and God are in each other, so, he asks, may the disciples be in them. This unity is also closely linked with the mission of Jesus in the world. "May they all … be one … so that the world may believe that you have sent me," he says. "As you have sent me into the world, so have I sent them into the world." Their unity and their sending are linked together just as Jesus' unity with God and sending from God are linked.

The mission of Jesus: If Jesus and God are one, then Jesus is from God. If Jesus is from God, then Jesus' followers will find God through him. This is the basis of the mission of Jesus. "No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known" (John 1:18).

Throughout the prayer, Jesus takes it as a given that he and God are one and that he is sent from God. He also takes it as a given that he is sending the

Jesus holds us together, and in Jesus we find unity.

disciples into the world. The purpose of the petition is to ask for the unity of the disciples. This is what is not a given. This is what Jesus must request as he prays.

This prayer was an important one for my wife Jill's grandfather A. J. Metzler. Whenever you asked him about whether or not the Mennonite Church (MC) and the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) should integrate, he would quote this prayer and then tell a story.

As the MC general secretary, he represented Mennonites at the 1961 Assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi, India. To him one of the more unusual things he noticed was the traditional clothing of the Orthodox priests. As an Anabaptist in Pennsylvania he had not come across this much. What he remembers so clearly was God telling him, "These also are your brothers." He figured that if these Orthodox priests were his brothers, then so were the brothers and sisters of the GC. Why wouldn't we integrate?

He lived until the historic vote for integration at Wichita '95. Since he died a year later, he did not live long enough to learn that integration was a painful process of union and division. There would be unity amid GCs and MCs but also new divisions. There would be a Canadian and a U.S. church.

Until 1999 I shared A.J.'s idealism about the integration of the MC and the GC. Our two denominations seemed so similar that it was hard for me to understand why we remained separate. If church people so alike can't find unity, then how can we ever expect unity from the broader denominations?

But institutional membership is different from unity. What I did not realize at that time was how many divisions there were within each of our denominations. Our divisions were too deep to remain in fellowship with each other.

What I discovered is that institutional unity is hardly possible, even for two small denominations within the same basic tradition of faith. With union comes division. If these two little denominations have such trouble, then who would dare work at unity among the larger denominations?

The ecumenical movement: Yet somehow for almost 100 years Protestants and Orthodox have worked toward the unity of this prayer. Roman Catholics have joined in the work of unity in their own way. As have Mennonites in our small, disorganized way. For most of the past century we were distrustful of these large denominations, and that may still be the prevailing attitude. But there have been occasions where Mennonites have participated in fruitful ways with what is called the ecumenical movement.

I already mentioned A.J. Metzler attending the World Council of Churches Assembly in New Delhi in 1961. I remember that Daniel Hertzler reported on an assembly as well, I think the Vancouver Assembly in 1983. He didn't sound real enthusiastic about it. Both John Howard Yoder and Tom Finger have represented Mennonites in theological conversations.

Like the merger of the MCs and GCs, the World Council of Churches seems to have produced as much division as unity. The WCC has produced great opposition. Several worldwide fellowships have grown up to promote unity in opposition to the WCC. The International Council of Christian Churches represented Fundamentalist Christians and the World Evangelical Fellowship represented Evangelicals.

What about the people Jesus is praying for in this middle section of the prayer? Don't we at least see unity among the disciples?

The Gospel of Mark reports that as the disciples approach Jerusalem for the suffering and death of Jesus, they keep arguing about their own impor-

The purpose of the petition is to ask for the unity of the disciples. This is what is not a given. This is what Jesus must request as he prays.

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Continued on page 16

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tance. In Mark 9:33 Jesus asks them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" But they remain silent because they had been arguing about who was the greatest. Jesus tries to explain to them that in his kingdom the greatest is the least, the leader is the servant, the first is the last.

Then in Mark 10:35-41, James and John ask Jesus to allow them to sit on his right and his left hand in his glory. When the other disciples hear about their request, they become angry.

The great dispute: Do they finally work together in unity after the resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit? As the book of Acts reports, here, too, there are ups and downs. In Acts 6 deacons are first called as a response to the complaints of some of the church members. Acts 15 and the letter to the Galatians tell us of the great dispute that arose because Phillip, Peter and Paul all baptized Gentiles into Jesus. The assumption had been that only Jews could be baptized. This division is also resolved. But no sooner is this one resolved, then at the end of chapter 15 Paul and Barnabas have a dispute about personnel. Acts 15:39 tells us they disagreed so sharply they decided to part ways. They never worked together again.

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If we are going to agree on anything as Christians, it is going to be what we can discern together through Jesus as revealed in the Scriptures.

Even amid the apostles we find division and dissension. From the beginning there is this lack of unity among the followers of Jesus. This disunity begins with the disciples, continues between the denominations of our day and among Mennonites. No wonder Jesus prayed for unity.

If God really desires the unity among the followers of Jesus that is found between God and Jesus, how do we even begin to make that unity a reality? Isn't the very attempt doomed from the beginning?

For all the ups and downs and bad theology that ecumenical groups such as the WCC and Promise Keepers have produced, they at least have brought together followers of Christ from different traditions. And they have fostered some kind of spiritual unity. But if as Jesus says we are not out of the world, then spiritual unity is not enough. The unity must also be part of this world and must be seen by the world.

If we are to find the unity that Jesus describes, then it will come through knowing the name of God. Jesus says, "I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world" (John 17:6).

In the Scriptures, to know the name of God is to know the character and nature of God. It is to know what God is like. As followers of Jesus, we believe Jesus has shown us what God is like. As Jesus says in John 14:9, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." Jesus has shown us the character and nature of God.

Jesus holds us together, and in Jesus we find unity. Any conversation amongst Christians about unity needs to remain focused on Jesus. This is what John Howard Yoder brought to the ecumenical conversation. If we are going to agree on anything as Christians, it is going to be what we can discern together through Jesus as revealed in the Scriptures. Let us begin with Jesus and the Scriptures and go from there.

Becoming like Jesus: The problem is that we can throw Scripture and Jesus around as weapons against each other. We all need to reach toward a maturity and growth in becoming like Jesus. As each of us knows what we believe and why we believe it, we learn not to force others to conform to our beliefs. We learn to listen to the different beliefs of others and not be threatened by them. Our goal is for all of us to think through our beliefs with integrity and live out those principles with integrity.

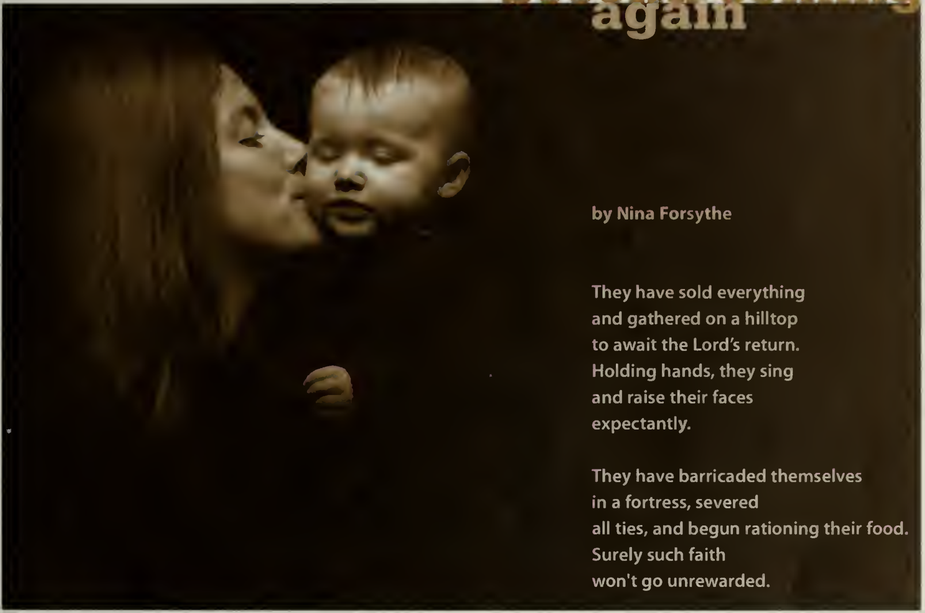
This takes a lot of trust, trust of each other and trust of the Spirit, that the Spirit is working in each of our lives, revealing God's way forward for us.

If God is the Creator of this gorgeously diverse planet, then could it be that God is also the author of our exquisitely diverse ways of thinking about God? Let 1,000 flowers bloom, with Jesus the Son providing the energy for the growth. Let us look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Within our wondrous diversity, let us find unity in Jesus Christ. May we grow into disciples like Jesus, who experience unity with one another and with God.

"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13).

Douglas Kaufman is pastor of Benton Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. This article is adapted from a sermon he gave on June 1, 2003.

Second coming again



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by Nina Forsythe

They have sold everything
and gathered on a hilltop
to await the Lord's return.
Holding hands, they sing
and raise their faces
expectantly.

They have barricaded themselves
in a fortress, severed
all ties, and begun rationing their food.
Surely such faith
won't go unrewarded.

The airwaves crackle
with interpretations of signs
and portents, fervent predictions.
The end has never been so near.
Believers scan the skies.

Over and over, Jesus
breaks the appointment,
muffs his entrance,
slips between the cracks
to be born again in a stable,
in a crowded emergency room,
in a refugee camp,
amid a hail of gunfire,
to a teenage girl
not fit to be a mother.

Nina Forsythe lives in Sioux City, Iowa.

Who will celebrate Epiphany with us?

Marlene Kropf is minister of worship, congregational and ministerial leadership for Mennonite Church USA.

Twenty years ago, when our family was considering a move from Oregon to Indiana, the first question our children asked was, "Who will celebrate Epiphany with us?"

Though there were many other questions they might have worried about, our traditional celebration of Epiphany was foremost on their minds. For several years we had invited our family's best friends for a meal and celebration on the evening of Jan. 6, marking the conclusion of the 12 days of Christmas.

The meal was always the same: good bread and a hearty winter stew (a welcome contrast to the richer fare of Christmas). Dessert was an Epiphany cake—an apple Bundt cake, into which we had tucked a Scripture verse (wrapped in foil) for each guest. Throughout the meal we shared "epiphany stories" of the year just past. After dessert and the reading of our verses, we gathered in the living room, where the lights of the Christmas tree still shone. There we sang all the songs we knew about stars and magi and watched the children perform a hilarious version of the story of the three kings (from a book called *Bible Stories You Can't Forget, No Matter How Hard You Try* by Marshall Efron, Dutton Children's Books, 1976).

A gift to be shared

We all remember the anticipation of one more celebration of the Christmas season after the family feasts and visits had ended. We also remember the delight of gathering with our dearest friends to ponder this wondrous story of a perilous journey, mysterious dreams and a guiding star in the night sky. Each year we entered more deeply into the revelation of God's appearing in human form. (Our family did find new friends in Indiana with whom to celebrate Epiphany. The tradition goes on—though we miss the children and their silly drama these days.)

Coming from the Greek word "epiphaneia," Epiphany simply means "shining" or "appearing." The Feast of Epiphany commemorates the visit of the Magi to the newborn Christ child and thus the first manifestation or appearing of Christ to the Gentiles.

Because Epiphany usually doesn't occur on Sunday, many churches neglect this occasion for worship. Yet we would do well to reclaim such a festive day. One reason is common sense. As an antidote to the Christmas blues, the let-down that inevitably occurs after all the parties are over, Epiphany offers one more chance to celebrate.

Two other reasons may be more significant. One has to do with our congregational worship patterns during the Christmas season. Because many of us travel to visit our families during the holidays, we miss out on Christmas worship in our own congregations. Though we wait together during the dark weeks of Advent, we may not, as a body, celebrate the coming of the light. Thus the season seems to have no climax. The mystery of Christ's coming is diminished, and we are not refreshed and renewed each year by the marvel of this celebration.

Further, the holiday season with all its distractions and the presence of Christmas visitors discourages substantive preaching. Without intending to, we may neglect the incarnation, a central claim of the Christian faith, and the church may become anemic in its understanding of who Jesus is.

A full observance of the Christmas season, including the great feast of Epiphany (either on Jan. 6 or the Sunday closest to Jan. 6), would reclaim a prime opportunity for singing and preaching this central mystery of our faith. It would also ensure that the congregation could experience the joyful climax of the season together.

The most significant reason for reclaiming the day, though, may have to do with the church's mission. The message of Christmas is that God comes to dwell among us in human form; God becomes one of us in order to be fully known. As the Persian poet Hafiz says: "God looked where in the world God might display his face / and pitched his tent in human fields, no other place."

But the amazing message of Epiphany extends even further. In the coming of Jesus Christ, God's cosmic purposes are revealed. Not for ourselves alone, the glorious appearing of God in Christ is a gift to be shared, a blessing for all the nations. Illuminating all the darkness that ever was or ever will be, the radiance of Epiphany is a sign that God's loving purposes will indeed be fulfilled—for the light that shines in Christ promises to heal and transform every creature and all creation (Ephesians 1). Through each of us and through the church, God desires that such good news be shared with all the world. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **A healthy Mennonite ecumenism**—John D. Roth
- **A joining of stories**—Chad Mason
- **Church family provides healing**—Laurie L. Oswald

Bomb kills pastor in Bogotá, Colombia

Segura pastored for one year; leaves young congregation, fiancée, elderly parents.

Javier Segura, 31-year-old pastor of a Mennonite congregation in Colombia, died instantly on Nov. 28 when a bomb exploded near a public building in downtown Bogotá. Six people were wounded.

Javier, pastor for less than a year, had just said good-bye to his fiancée at her home and was waiting for public transportation to return to his home. He lived with his elderly parents.

The bomb had been placed beside an obstacle on the sidewalk in front of a city building. The government has offered a 100-million-peso reward for information leading to the identification of the assailants.

Bombs in Colombian cities are part of life in Colombia, which is torn apart by various armed actors: insurgent groups, paramilitaries, drug traffickers, common delinquents and government forces.

"People learn to live with the danger," says Peter Stucky, president of the Colombian Mennonite Church, "but you never expect to be the victim, particularly in a city of 7 million or more people. All the same it's very painful when these things come close and affect the church."

Segura was a member of the Sinaí Mennonite Church, located just a few blocks from the bomb explosion. He had been trained by pastor Islandes Lozada for a number of years and within the last year had been asked to pastor the La Victoria Mennonite Church, a young church in the populous south-eastern sector of Bogotá. Javier had a gift with young people and was much loved by his congregation.

The Colombian Mennonite Church has worked actively in promoting a nonviolent witness in its own churches as well as other Protestant churches during the last 20 years.

Because of the constant danger in which church people live and threats of various sorts received by pastors and church workers, Justapaz, the church's center for justice, peace and nonviolent action, was asked by the National Committee to offer workshops for pastors and church leaders on security precautions and protective measures.

In the same week as Segura's death, a delegation of about 10 people from the Mennonite churches was visiting the city of Barrancabermeja and the communities along the Opon River, where Christian Peacemaker Teams "get in the way for peace." They wanted to learn more about nonviolent peace witness and to accompany the CPT group there.

The Colombian Mennonite Church laments the enormous loss of Javier Segura and prays that his death may produce much fruit.—*Jenny Neme of Mennonite World Conference News Service*

You never expect to be the victim, particularly in a city of 7 million or more people. —Peter Stucky

Peter Rempel

Plan global gathering

Emmanuel Minj (left), Asia representative to the Global Mission Fellowship (GMF) planning committee, and Shant Kunjam, outgoing chairman of Asia Mennonite Conference, meet this fall in Almaty with the planning committee.

Almaty, the capital of Kazakhstan, in Central Asia, was designated the site of the next gathering of GMF. The dates will be Sept. 21-24, 2006.

After a global consultation in Guatemala in 2000 called for the formation of a global mission fellowship of Anabaptist-related churches, the inaugural gathering of GMF occurred in Bulawayo before and during the Mennonite World Conference Assembly in August 2003. At that time some 55 church conferences and mission groups joined GMF.

GMF's definition of mission includes the whole range of ministries directed beyond Christian communities—from evangelism to relief aid. Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches and mission agencies engaged in such cross-cultural ministries are members in GMF.—*MWC News Service*

Mission workers return to China province

Congregations with several hundred in 1947 now have 30,000 in one county.

Rod Suderman

Jeanette Hanson, representing Mennonite Mission Network in China, greets a group of Christians from Dongming, China, who had been out of contact with Mennonites since mission workers were asked to leave China in 1947.

For nearly 40 years, North American Mennonites worshiped with Chinese at a church in Shangdong province. In 1947, they were asked to leave the country. Until October, Mennonites had not been back.

"We have been waiting a very long time for Mennonites to return and visit," said one Christian woman in the rural area of Dongming, China, where Mennonites first made contact in the early 1900s.

"More than 50 years qualifies as a very long time," said Myrrl Byler, director of China Educational Exchange.

Henry and Maria Brown arrived in China in 1909, lived in Puyang and established mission stations in a rural six-county area located south of Beijing and northwest of Shanghai. August and Martha Ewert were two workers in Dongming and Changyuan during the 1930s, spending a lot of time in Dongming. They made their last visit to Dongming in 1947; Mennonite Central Committee workers delivered relief goods to the region as late as 1950.

In the summer of 2003, Christians in Dongming wrote to Roland Brown, whose parents, Henry and Maria Brown, were the first missionaries in China from the former General Conference Mennonite Church. The Dongming group invited Brown to visit their congregation, recalled the work of Roland's parents and noted that due to changing situations in China they now could extend an invitation, something they had been unable to do when Brown and family members previously asked about returning for a visit.

Roland Brown, who worked as a Mennonite mission doctor in Taiwan for most of his career, was a teenager when his parents sent him back to the United States. He now is retired in Newton, Kan., but was unable to respond to the invitation because of a family health situation. He passed the invitation to Mennonites currently working in China.

Government officials and church leaders were aware of the history of the church and its beginnings with the Browns and the Mennonites. They showed an enlarged photo of church workers that had been taken during the 1920s.

When the group arrived in Dongming, they were told that there were Christians at the church waiting for them.

"What we didn't realize," said Byler, "is that the believers had been at the church already for five days, taking part in a five-day, all-day, revival meeting. When we arrived on a Friday afternoon, the church was completely packed with about 500 to 600 people."

The visitors greeted the congregation.

"Every short blessing and remark I made was greeted with enthusiastic applause," said Byler. "Afterwards the courtyard outside the church was filled with excitement as the people streamed out to take pictures with us and see the foreign visitors."

Several church leaders and the local government officials who oversee religion hosted the visit. Dongming County now has a population of more than 700,000 people. Where there were only several hundred Christians when Mennonite missionaries left in 1947, there are now 30,000 believers in Dongming County, the largest Christian population of any of the six counties where Mennonite missionaries worked. Many churches and meeting points are scattered throughout the county, with the main church located in the city of Dongming.

There is only one ordained pastor in the entire county—he is a graduate of the Nanjing Biblical Seminary. As is the case all over China, the work of the church is carried on by elders, evangelists and other lay workers.

Almost all the believers gathered at the church were farmers but were of all ages, both men and women. They are not Mennonite in name—the church in China has attempted to do away with denominational distinctions—but they are fruit of the seed planted through efforts of Mennonite missionaries and their dedicated Chinese co-workers.

"We hope to maintain contact with the church in Dongming, to learn more of their story, to be inspired by their example," Byler said the group decided. "There may also be ways in which we can offer them assistance, as this is a very poor area. We were told that six churches in the county had been damaged the previous year because of floods."—*Melodie Davis of Mennonite Mission News Service*

Church-to-church relations grow in Gulf States

Native American congregations explore partnerships with northern congregations.

Nanih Waiya Indian Mennonite Church, a small Native American congregation with about 65 members near Preston, Miss., is one of a number of Mennonite congregations in the south exploring one-on-one partnerships with northern counterparts.

"Our eyes are taken off … how we worship in our culture, and we are made aware of how our brothers and sisters in the north worship," says Mark Roth, pastor at Nanih Waiya. He describes Nanih Waiya as a "close family."

Nanih Waiya has partnered with Holdeman Mennonite Church in Wakarusa, Ind. Discussions between the two congregations started almost two years ago. Roth says the major benefit of one-on-one partnerships is the relationship building that takes place.

"We trust that we can be an inspiration to the Holdeman church as they learn to know us and how their Native American brothers and sisters worship," says Roth.

Currently the two congregations are in the learning process, says Roth. A couple from Holdeman came to worship at Nanih Waiya, and Roth has taken part in a service at Holdeman. Plus, Holdeman has helped Nanih Waiya purchase books for its library, and the partners are exploring possible exchanges between their two youth groups.

"This is definitely a new experience for both congregations," says Roth.

Other Mennonite congregations are going through similar experiences. Dave Weaver, who chairs the leadership commission of the Gulf States Mennonite Conference, helped set up some of these partnerships between north and south congregations.

Christy Hickman, a member of the Choctaw Christian Church in Louisville, Miss., teaches Andrew Weaver, from Blainesport Mennonite Church the finer points of stickball.

Dave Weaver

Dave Weaver

Mississippi Mennonites (from left) Larry Miller and Larry Murphy get help from Blainesport friends Stan Horst and John Eberly to build a shed with lumber (background) salvaged by Murphy .

"There are obvious benefits for some of the small, struggling congregations in the south," says Weaver. "In many cases they feel overwhelmed and incapable due to lack of resources. They begin to realize that they are not alone but part of a larger church."

Weaver contacted some members of the Lebanon and Ephrata districts in the Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference about forming partnerships. Since then, some individuals from the conference and the youth group from Blainesport Mennonite Church, Stevens, Pa., have traveled to the Gulf States, according to Carl Horning, assistant moderator of the Lancaster Conference.

Since those visits south, a committee has been formed in Lancaster Conference to guide future involvement. Horning says benefits of one-on-one relationships include opportunities for both groups to grow spiritually, but the logistics of distance and cultural differences remain challenges.

Another one-on-one partnership is between Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church and the Poarch Community Church in Atmore, Ala. Joe Bontrager, regional director of the Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions, says this relationship began nearly 10 years ago with a work team that traveled to Atmore.

"The relationship took on a life of its own as several personal friendships grew out of the experience," says Bontrager. He says those friendships still provide energy. "It has energized the people who have participated in the relationship with interest in individuals and a congregation in another area and of a different culture."—*Brian Hook*

Mennonite Church Canada sees pattern

Projected deficit of $120,000 could mean recalling four international workers.

At the same time that a $120,000 shortfall is being projected for Mennonite Church Canada for the 2004-05 fiscal year, a research report on how Canadian congregations direct their giving has been submitted to the Mennonite Church Canada General Board. "Where the Money Goes: An Analysis of Congregational Giving Distribution in Mennonite Church Canada" is based on data gathered from congregational tax records submitted to Canada Revenue Agency for the years 2000-2002.

We heard loud and clear [in 2003] that congregations wanted more time to help turn around our financial situation. —Dan Nighswander

Impetus for the research stemmed in part from delegate concerns expressed at Mennonite Church Canada's 2003 assembly in St. Catharines, Ont., about how much Mennonite Church Canada money is directed to international ministries relative to home-based or national ministries. The report looked at how congregational dollars are distributed. On average, 5.4 percent of congregational distributions were aimed at international ministry, including the work of agencies such as Mennonite Central Committee. Meanwhile, 40 percent of Mennonite Church Canada's budget is targeted to international ministry.

While congregational giving to international ministries decreased by only 0.44 percent between 2000 and 2002, that decrease represented $200,000, says the report. In real terms, it could mean the recall of up to four international mission workers from abroad.

The findings also revealed that while overall area conference giving increased slightly during the three-year period, national conference giving remained stable over the same period. However, in Mennonite Church Eastern Canada area conference, giving declined over the three-year time period while national conference giving jumped significantly in Mennonite Church Manitoba.

The report said, "This effort attempts to understand the choices congregations make when deciding how to distribute their generosity. It is not a judgment of congregational decision making."

The report concluded that the pattern of increased congregational disbursements to home-based ministry has continued over time. In 1964, congregations on average spent 55 percent of the donations they received on local ministry. That figure increased to 63.6 percent in the early 1990s and to 75.3 percent in this study.

"This analysis helps us understand how and where we as a collective community of congregations are directing our generosity," says Al Rempel, director of resource development for Mennonite Church Canada and author of the report, "and invites us to think about how we balance our giving to address needs at home and internationally."

Dan Dyck

Al Rempel (left), resource development director for Mennonite Church Canada, reviews funding issues with treasurer Claire Schlegal during Mennonite Church Canada Support Services Council meetings in Winnipeg in October.

The report also concluded that trends identified in an earlier study done by the Conference of Mennonites in Canada have not yet been adequately addressed. The 1993 report said, "A long-term financial strategy cannot be developed without first ensuring that the CMC constituency feels that its goals and priorities are reflected in CMC's activities."

"We need to continue to develop greater ownership and appreciation for Mennonite Church Canada's ministry," Rempel says, "but there also needs to be a fuller conversation about how to fund ... the work that we can best do together."

The recent report provided a backdrop for the projected $120,000 shortfall this year.

"We heard loud and clear that congregations wanted more time to help turn around our financial situation in 2003," says Dan Nighswander, general secretary for Mennonite Church Canada. "This new report helps us understand how we share our giving as a nationwide church and offers an opportunity for deeper congregational conversation around how we balance our generosity."

Mennonite Church Canada staff has already begun adjusting next year's budget downward but are hopeful that the projections will not come to fruition. One staff person was reminded of the hopeful question asked by a delegate at the Winkler 2004 assembly: What could we do with a 1 percent increase?

Janet Plenert, executive director of MC Canada's International Ministries, responded that 1 percent, or an additional $450,000 per year, would allow ministry growth in places like Thailand to support new partners for their ambitious plan to plant 10 churches in 20 years.—*Dan Dyck of Mennonite Church Canada News Service*

Electronic transfer tithing catches on

Firstfruits Direct Giving increases giving discipline, helps church budgets.

Snowbirds make the trek from Indiana to Florida for the winter, but their giving to their home church in Indiana never skips a beat. A family from a congregation in Georgia moves to Italy due to a job transfer, and their church continues to receive their monetary gifts without the family ever writing a check.

Firstfruits Direct Giving is an electronic funds transfer program that has been available for individuals in Mennonite Church USA congregations since early this year.

Celina Romero of Clinton Frame Mennonite Church near Goshen, Ind., is one of the new participants.

"I love it personally because I do everything else electronically," Romero says. "It's very convenient when I'm not home—our giving happens automatically—I just have to make sure the money is there."

Unlike Romero, Brenda Shelby of Berea Mennonite Church in Atlanta doesn't do any financial transactions electronically—except for Direct Giving. When her congregation decided to make it an option, Shelby, who is the church treasurer, decided she'd like to give it a try.

"You don't have to think about it, and it saves on checks," she says.

Currently about 20 percent of the Berea congregation is participating, including a family who recently moved to Rome, Italy.

"We have another member who lives about 80 miles away from the church," Shelby says, "who is participating. The Direct Giving plan makes it possible for these people to give regularly even if they can't attend."

Even for those who attend their worship services on a regular basis, Direct Giving has several significant benefits. Dennis Miller of East Union Mennonite Church in Kalona, Iowa, uses the word "discipline."

"People think they are disciplined in their giving, but this really helps them be more disciplined, and it helps churches … with cash flow," Miller says. "It helps churches meet budgets and other financial goals, like for missions and building projects."

Manhattan (Kan.) Mennonite Fellowship has about 10 percent of its giving units involved, according to treasurer Dusti Ivey. An exciting surprise for her, though, was that some people signed up who weren't regular givers.

Congregations with the Direct Giving option seek to show that even though the offering isn't put into the plate on Sunday morning, giving directly is still an offering, and it's still worship.

Shelby heard the concern from members about wanting to give an offering as part of their worship experience and as a way to model giving for their children. So she created a card that can be placed in the offering as a symbol of their financial gift.
—Carol Duerksen for Mennonite Church USA News Service

People think they are disciplined in their giving, but this really helps them be more disciplined.
—Dennis Miller

Jim Bishop

Christmas kits blitz

Although the goal was 300 kits, students, faculty and staff at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., put together 364 kits, which found their way to Mennonite Central Committee's donation center in Hinton, Va., in late November for distribution next year.

Participants were challenged to pick up one or more fabric bags in early November and fill them with notebooks, pencils, a plastic ruler, a box of colored pencils and one large pencil eraser. Completed kits were collected at various locations around campus and then brought forward at the close of the Nov. 12 chapel service.

Left: EMU students Valerie Showalter and Derrick Charles check over some of the kits brought to the chapel service.
—Eastern Mennonite University News Service

Andres (far left) plays the marimba along with his sons Alfredo, Andres, Melardo and Mario. The marimba, formerly associated with ungodly partying, was abandoned by K'ekchi' Mennonites for the first six to seven years of the church.

Bob Brubaker

K'ekchi' Mennonites mark 35 years

Eastern Mennonite Missions workers return to healthy churches.

K'ekchi' Mennonites celebrated 35 years since the first Mennonite missionaries came to work among them. The anniversary event was held in new facilities in Bezaleel, Oct. 21-22.

Bob and Sandy Brubaker, Eastern Mennonite Missions workers in Guatemala from 1971 to 1985, returned to speak at the event and to congratulate Pablo Tzul, one of the first three K'ekchi' believers to be baptized in 1972. Tzul will retire next month after a 12-year stint as president of the church but will continue as an evangelist and teacher.

"I remember hearing Pablo teach Sunday school for the first time," Bob says. "It's fulfilling to see his growth as a leader. K'ekchi' leaders … are really owning the church in a healthy way."

When the Brubakers left in 1987, there were about 50 to 60 congregations with 6,000 believers. At the 35th celebrations, the K'ekchi' leaders reported that there are now 100 congregations, with baptized believers numbering around 10,000.

Bob noted that in recent years the church has grown through the addition of charismatic Catholic congregations who want to become Mennonite.

The Brubakers were impressed with both the growth in numbers and the growth of programs. Sandy was awed to see how the first small clinic she helped start in 1973 has grown into a public health program; the program now works in cooperation with the government to touch thousands of lives throughout the country. The K'ekchi' also have their own elementary and middle school, a weavers' co-op, a Bible institute and special programs for women and youth.—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions News Service*

EDITORIAL POSITIONS

Mennonite Publishing Network and Brethren Press, publishers of the forthcoming *Gather 'Round* Sunday school curriculum seek to fill two editorial positions:

gather 'ROUND
hearing & sharing God's good news

Managing Editor
Full-time position managing the receipt, scheduling, and production of all curriculum materials; editing and proofreading copy; and assisting project director with overall development and administration. Applicants should have excellent editorial and communication skills, have high ability to manage detail, and be well-grounded in Mennonite or Church of the Brethren beliefs and practices. Location: Elgin, Ill., preferred. Start date: End of February 2005 or sooner.

Associate Editor
Half-time contract position overseeing the writing and design of student resources for the curriculum. Applicant should have excellent writing and editorial skills, communicate well in person and over distance, and be well-grounded in Mennonite or Church of the Brethren beliefs and practices. Location: Open. Start date: End of February 2005 or sooner.

Denominational balance on project staff will be a significant factor in selection. Contact Anna Speicher, project director, at gatherround@brethren.org or 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120. Phone 800-323-8039, ext. 209. Deadline for inquiries: January 15, 2005.

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CALENDAR

Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., Sustainable Farming Conference, Feb. 25-27. For more information contact Cheryl Paulovich at 800-839-1021.

WORKERS

Busick, Dustin, was installed Oct. 17 as youth pastor of South Hutchinson (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

Johnston, Andy, was installed Oct. 17 as pastor at Atlanta (Ga.) Mennonite Fellowship.

Troyer, Marty, was ordained Oct. 17 to Christian ministry at Hesston (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bauman, Andrew Patrick, Nov. 8, to Steven and Andrea Landes Bauman, Sellersville, Pa.

Clymer, Zoe Emma, Nov. 27, to Mike and Melody Good Clymer, Meridian, Miss.

Derstine, Mackenzie Renae, Nov. 27, to Joel and Renae Allebach Derstine, Harleysville, Pa.

Divers, Julia Morgan, Nov. 9, to Tim and Lauryn Sayler Divers, Pasadena, Calif.

Dorr, Amara Grace, Nov. 26, to Mark and Ruth Kanagy Door, Altoona, Iowa.

Grau, Allyson Raye and Jacob Andrew (twins), Nov. 17, to Eric and Angela Glenn Grau, Lowville, N.Y.

Hendricks, Noelle Lee, Oct. 5, to Matthew and Shelly Hendricks, Minneapolis.

Hostick, Paula Ree, Sept. 17, to Cody and Donna Stucky Hostick, Kennewick, Wa.

Kauffman, Abigail Rose, Nov. 12, to Aaron and Laura Souder Kauffman, Harrisonburg, Va.

Kauffman, Neil David, Nov. 23, to Ryan and Valerie Smith Kauffman, Columbus, Ohio.

Markle, Levi, Sept. 28, to Brian and Karen Kreider Markle, Reston, Va.

Miller, Emily Louise, Nov. 15, to Jarrod and Stephanie Miller, Louisville, Ohio.

Nafziger, Aria Nicole, Nov. 8, to Alan and Audry Rohn Nafziger, Santa Barbara, Calif.

Yoder, Amanda Joyce, Nov. 15, to Curt and Carolyn Wert Yoder, Mount Joy, Pa.

Yoder, Matthew Joseph, Aug. 31, to Joseph and Amy Courtney Yoder, Walnut Creek, Ohio.

Yoder, Rilen Christopher, Nov. 11, to Eric and Chrissy Yoder, Louisville, Ohio.

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EUROPEAN HERITAGE (July 7-22)
SMALL TOWN THEATRES and COUNTRY GARDENS (July 26 - August 1)
RUSSIA and UKRAINE (July 29 - August 12)
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INDONESIA (November 10-27)

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MARRIAGES

Clarkson/Mueller: Marilyn Clarkson, Hesston, Kan., and Alan Mueller, Halstead, Kan., Sept. 18 at First Mennonite Church, Halstead.

Doell/Wahl: Sheree Doell, Altona, Man., and DJ (Dennis John) Wahl, Altona, Dec. 11 at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

DEATHS

Beck, Sylvia B. Merillat, 96, Archbold, Ohio, died Nov. 23. Spouse: (1st) Ellden Merrillat (deceased), (2nd) James (Jim) Beck (deceased). Parents: Jonathon Nafzinger and Amelia Sauder. Children: John, Lois May, Elaine Noe; stepchildren Robert, James, William, Lois Rufenacht, Carolyn Bateman; 16 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 27 at Fairlawn Haven Chapel, Archbold.

Berger, Martha, 96, North Newton, Kan., died Oct. 20. Spouse: Milton John Berger (deceased). Parents: John and Susanne Ruth Amstutz. Child: Marilyn Musser; 15 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 22 in Newton, Kan.

Bontrager, Mertice Yoder, 70, Topeka, Ind., died Nov. 21. Spouse: DeWayne Bontrager. Parents: Quinton and Edith Yoder. Children: Rod, Terry; five grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 24 at Topeka Mennonite Church.

Brooks, Maxine Sommers, 87, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 5. Spouse: (1st) Clifford A. Martin (deceased), (2nd) Harold A. Brooks (deceased). Parents: John and Bertha Taylor Sommers. Children: Fyrne Lantz, Twila Harder; step-children Carolyn Blosser, Ronald, Allen; three grandchildren; nine step-grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 9 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Brubacher, Glen, 66, St. Jacobs, Ont., died Nov. 16 of leukemia. Parents: Wilbert and Hettie Wideman Brubacher. Funeral: Nov. 20 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

Claassen, Evelyn Jantz, 87, Marlin, Wa., died Oct. 15. Spouse: Clinton C. Claassen. Parents: Andrew and Wilhemina Franz Jantz. Children: Sharon Meyer, Eugene, Cleon, Patrice; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 22 at Menno Mennonite Church, Ritzville, Wa.

Deckert, Ruth Klassen, 91, Inman, Kan., died Nov. 15. Spouse: Harvey Deckert. Parents: Henry and Catherine Schroeder Klassen. Children: Dwight, Donald, Donna Ruth Holiday; six grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 19 at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Detwiler, Sheldon Len, 65, Hesston, Kan., died Nov. 27. Parents: Ralph and Verna Miller Detwiler. Funeral: Nov. 30 at Schowalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Dinius, Anna Marie, 56, Archbold, Ohio, died Nov. 15. Spouse: Wayne Dinius. Parents: Henry and Bernice Short. Children: Sam, John, Ruth, Pete; one grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 18 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

- Editor@TheMennonite.org
- fax 574-535-6050
- 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794

Goering, John W., 96, Moundridge, Kan., died Nov. 13. Spouse: Agnes A. Wedel Goering (deceased). Parents: John C. and Adina Wedel Goering. Children: J. Randall, Steve W., Karen Goering Hostetler; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 17 at First Mennonite Church, McPherson, Kan.

Harrison, Cora Sanders, 63, Salem, Ore., died Nov. 1 of a heart attack. Spouse: Jim Harrison. Parents: Walt and Dorothy Sanders. Children: Clayton, Norman, Julie Harris, Crystal; three grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 7 at Western Mennonite Church, Salem.

Hofer, Joe K., Jr., 76, Freeman, S.D., died Nov. 14. Spouse: Lorraine Hofer. Parents: Joe K. and Elizabeth J. Hofer. Children: Lonnie, Kenton, Connie; five grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 17 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Hofer, Martha J. Tschetter, 89, Freeman, S.D., died Nov. 22. Spouse: Arnold J. Hofer (deceased). Parents: David G. and Kathrina Tschetter. Children: Roger, Bruce. Funeral: Nov. 24 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Janzen, Calvin, 79, Hesston, Kan., died Nov. 19. Spouse: Marjorie Franzen Janzen. Parents: Gustav and Emma Voth Janzen. Children: Craig, Barbara Meinhardt, Beverly Helfinstein; six grandchildren: 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 22 at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

McQuillin, Ruth Ann, 65, Archbold, Ohio, died Oct. 6. Spouse: Russell McQuillin. Parents: John and Charity Crossgrove. Children: Rod, Rick, Rita; five grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 9 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Peachey, Emily Wenger, 67, Scottdale, Pa., died Nov. 27 of cancer. Spouse: J. Lorne Peachey. Parents: John R. and Dorothy Mellinger Wenger. Children: Jon Welty, Anita M.; one grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 30 at Scottdale Mennonite Church.

Stamm, Delilah Birky, 85, Colorado Springs, Colo., died Nov. 18. Spouse: Paul Stamm. Parents: Alvin and Lizzie Heiser Birky. Children: Ina Bird, Bonnie Gingerich, Nancy Hall, Barbara, Ron; 11 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 24 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Stobbe, Anne, 100, Altona, Man., died Nov. 13. Spouse: David D. Stobbe (deceased). Parents: Frank Loewen and Maria Braun. Children: Gordon, Irene Raedel, Ronald, Marilyn Nelson (deceased); eight grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 19 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Swartzendruber, Frances M.T., 73, Scottsdale, Ariz., died Oct. 29. Spouse: H. Dwight Swartzendruber. Children: Fred, Dan, David; five grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 1 at Trinity Mennonite Church, Glendale, Ariz.

Troyer, Laura, 93, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 29. Parents: Eli and Rebecca Good Troyer. Funeral: Nov. 2 at Greencroft Meetinghouse, Goshen.

Witmer, Mary Elizabeth Gall, 84, Elizabethtown, Pa., died Oct. 29. Spouse: Irwin L. Witmer. Children: Vernon, Doris Timko, Kenneth, Rose Landis Ward, Eldon, Howard; 15 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 3 at Elizabethtown Mennonite Church.

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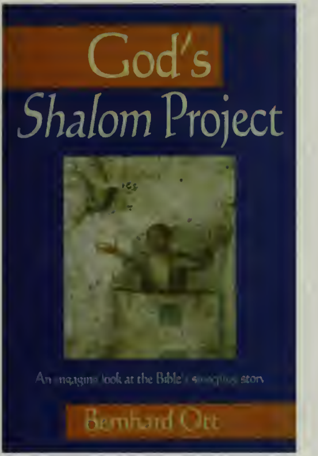
(a project of Mennonite World Conference)



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God's *Shalom* Project

by Bernhard Ott

About this book

This illumination of the biblical story reads like music.

The author shows God to be a gracious parent, intent on a restored relationship with humans. It is that ongoing effort which Ott calls the *Shalom* Project. Realized fully, *Shalom* includes harmony among humans, and between humans and creation.

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Purpose of the Shelf

The Global Anabaptist/ Mennonite Shelf of Literature envisions a new book selection each year, encouraging the fellowships around the world to translate it into their own languages. The book or booklet of the year may have been published first in any one of the languages spoken within the Anabaptist-related fellowships found in 62 countries around the world. For more information, email Executive Secretary Larry Miller at LarryMiller@MWC-cmm.org.

Global Anabaptist/Mennonite Shelf of Literature

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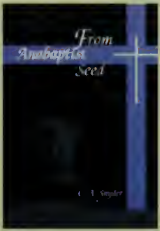

From Anabaptist Seed
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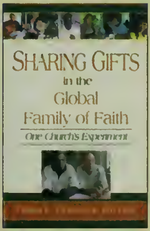

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To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Kristene Miller, or email TheMennonite@TheMennonite.org.

Whitehall Mennonite Church, a small congregation just north of Allentown, Pa., is seeking a ***full- time pastor*** with several years experience and a solid track record in church growth. Preferably his experience and record of church growth will be from within the Mennonite Church. His sermons should flow from the Scriptures—inviting and encouraging others to live a life reconciled to Christ. The position is a three-year position with salary commensurate with conference guidelines. The position may become long-term depending upon budget. Credentialing will be through the Franconia Mennonite Conference, a member of MC USA. Interested candidates should contact Nevin M. Ranck, nranck@ptd.net, 610-767-0762, 610-262-1270 or Pastoral Search Committee, Whitehall Mennonite Church, 4138 Wilson St., Whitehall, PA 18052. Inquiries accepted until Jan. 15, 2005.

Position: The four-year Interpreter Training Program located in the **Department of Modern Classical Languages and Literatures at Goshen College** is seeking an ***assistant professor.*** Appointment begins Fall 2005. Applications will be reviewed Feb.15, 2005, and will continue until the position is filled. Faculty responsibilities begin Aug.15, 2005.

Qualifications: A master's degree required, Ph.D. preferred, in linguistics, education, sign language interpreting or a related field; prefer someone with multicultural experience; ASLTA certification or working toward certification. Preference will be given to candidates who exhibit both strong professional and teaching credentials.

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The college: Goshen College is a four-year liberal arts institution dedicated to the development of informed, articulate, sensitive and responsible Christians. As a ministry of the Mennonite Church, the college seeks to integrate Christian values with educational and professional life. Education is viewed as a moral activity that produces servant leaders for the church and world.

To apply: Please send a letter of application, resumé and three professional or business letters of reference by email, fax, or postal mail to Minerva Andriotis, Administrative Assistant for Human Resources, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526-4795, telephone 574-535-7707, fax 574-535-7060, email hr@goshen.edu. Complete the online Personnel Information Form. Women and minority people are especially encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Administrative and teaching faculty members are expected to share this commitment.

Director of development: **Spruce Lake Retreat,** a dynamic, multifaceted camp ministry serving 26,000 people annually and affiliated with the Mennonite Church, seeks mission-minded person for full-time position.

The director of development is responsible for overseeing the fund-raising and development activities that help sustain and advance the ministry. Currently Spruce Lake is in the midst of a major capital campaign and has a number of annual fund-raising events and initiatives. The ideal candidate will be a passionate advocate of Christian camping, be connected with the Mennonite Church, possess outstanding relational and communication skills and have the energy and vision to advocate strongly for this ministry.

Salary and liberal benefits package provided. On-camp housing may be available, or this person may choose to work out of their own home if situated in the eastern half of Pennsylvania. Spruce Lake is located on 370 scenic acres in the Pocono Mountains of northeastern Pa. Send resumé to Executive Director, RR 1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; phone 800-822-7505; fax 570-595-0328; email director@sprucelake.org.

Free-lance designer wanted to design portions of **The Mennonite**. This part-time opportunity begins Feb. 1, 2005. If interested, send resumé and samples to Everett@TheMennonite.org or mail to The Mennonite, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526. For more information, call 574-535-6051.

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For more information, please contact Patricia Wudel, Executive Director, at 202-265-7174. Or send resumé to patty@josephshouse.org or fax 202-234-8195.

Goshen College department of sociology/anthropology and social work seeks applicants for a ***tenure-track position in sociology.*** We are seeking a candidate who has a curricular focus in the areas of sociological theory and methods. Consideration will be given to any specialization within sociology. Additional background in anthropology is preferred. Candidates must exhibit strong teaching credentials. A Ph.D. in sociology is required by Fall 2005. Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Women and minority people are encouraged to apply. To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, www.goshen.edu/employment. Closing date for applications is Dec. 25.

Bluffton University invites applications for the following positions:

Visual art: Full time, tenure track faculty position in visual art beginning fall 2005. MFA in graphic design or MFA in another visual art discipline with graphic design emphasis or experience. Two years professional experience in graphic design preferred. Expertise in printmaking, photography, drawing or painting also required. Teach courses in graphic design and two-dimensional studio media. Additional assignments in art foundations and general education. Review of applications begins Feb. 1 and continues until an appointment is made. In addition to the items listed below, please submit a slide portfolio featuring 20 works of art.

Instruction and Web services librarian beginning July 1, 2005. Required: master's degree from an ALA-accredited program; extensive knowledge of information literacy practices and current trends in pedagogy; demonstrated teaching ability; experience in Web site design and development; innovative approach to library services and programs. Preferred: 3-5 years reference and instruction experience in an academic library. Responsibilities: Provide vision and leadership for the Musselman Library instruction program, including development, promotion, delivery and assessment. The incumbent works collaboratively with other librarians and with the teaching faculty to integrate information literacy competencies into the curriculum. The position manages all aspects of the library Web site and serves as chair of the Library Web Group. As a member of the reference team, he/she provides research assistance through scheduled participation at the Reference Desk. The position oversees OPAL, OhioLINK and Interlibrary Loan activity for the library. Review of applications begins Jan. 10 and continues until an appointment is made.

Compensation for these positions is commensurate with education and experience within the university pay scale. For additional information see www.bluffton.edu. Send letter of interest, resumé or curriculum vita, three letters of reference (submitted directly from referee) and official transcripts to Elaine Suderman, Administrative Assistant for Academic Affairs, Bluffton University, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, OH 45817-2104. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. EOE.

Goshen College seeks ***internship development coordinator*** to work with all departments in creating new internship opportunities in Indiana, particularly in our region. This is an initial 30-month, grant-funded position with the possibility of continued employment. The coordinator will provide leadership, management and administration in the development and implementation of new internship opportunities as well as promote the services of the Career Services Office. Bachelor's degree required. At least two years of experience in an educational, business or organizational setting. Candidates with work experience in a sales or marketing environment or with internships are preferred.

To apply, visit the position announcement on the college Web page, www.goshen.edu/employment. Women and minority people are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

Norristown New Life, a 115-member urban, multicultural, Spanish/English congregation is seeking a ***half-time (2.5 days per week) bilingual Hispanic associate pastor*** to serve as a member of our pastoral leadership team.

We are prayerfully seeking someone who is able to work with a leadership team, has a passion for evangelism and community outreach, is gifted in both preaching and teaching, has a vision for urban church growth, is flexible and spiritually mature and has an Anabaptist understanding and commitment.

For more information contact Norristown New Life, 3 East Marshall St., Norristown, PA 19401; 610-279-5433; email NNL3@Juno.Com; attention Admino Oritz, Search Committee Chair.

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Simply put, it's complex

Gordon Houser

Beware of sages offering simple explanations, including this one. Since the U.S. election, the media has been full of explanations for why Bush won or Kerry lost. Hundreds of pundits have opined about "red states" and "blue states," while others have pointed out that we really live in a divided "purple America."

Our culture seems to long for simple explanations. Critical thinking and reasonable argument have gone the way of the Hula Hoop or the eight-track tape.

With the loss of reasonable argument has also gone respect for the other person's position. During and after the election, the media (including TV, radio, print, Internet) have been filled with invective. The trend seems to be that if you disagree with someone, rather than try to understand their reasons for what they think or believe, you simply insult them. How many times have you heard one side or the other dismissed with some pejorative term ("stupid" or "immoral")?

One context of discussion has been about "moral values." This arose from the use of this ambiguous term on an exit poll of voters. The truth is that most of our choices involve our moral values—whether in regard to how we vote, what we buy, where we work or with whom we associate.

Our culture is filled with complexities and contradictions. As cultural critic Frank Rich wrote in the *New York Times*: "John Kerry's vote notwithstanding, it's blue America, not red, that is inexorably winning the culture war, and by a landslide."

Rich points to numerous examples, including Rupert Murdoch, whose corporation not only offers Fox News but such books as *How to Make Love Like a Porn Star*. Meanwhile, the most popular show on TV, in so-called blue states and red states, is "Desperate Housewives."

For a good example of the complexity of media as well as people, watch *Control Room*, out on DVD and video. This documentary looks at the Middle East news agency Al-Jazeera and its coverage of the early weeks of the Iraq war. The film is both sympathetic and critical of Al-Jazeera. It shows what any media outlet should acknowledge, that all reporting has a bias. Yet good reporting will include various sides. Al-Jazeera received heavy criticism for showing U.S. soldiers who had been killed or captured. Yet, as a U.S. army spokesman says in the film, it also showed Iraqis who had been killed. Through this film you get to know the reporters and the army personnel as they try to work together.

The complexity of people often gets lost in our cultural conversation. People are given labels and fit into certain stereotypes. Face to face can be different. As I've spoken with a variety of people about why they voted as they did, the reasons and the ambivalence are as individual as the people. Most of us carry an array of likes and dislikes, prejudices and blind spots, complexities and contradictions. Yet we often have difficulty allowing others to have similar inconsistencies.

One of the most troubling aspects of the last several months is how our culture has set the agenda for Christians. We end up fighting each other over categories drawn from the wider society, calling ourselves and others either "conservative Republicans" or "liberal Democrats." What happened to "brothers and sisters in Christ"?

Anabaptists are sensitive toward what it called the Constantinian temptation, i.e. being in charge of society. That temptation seems to have captured many Christians. Rather than seeing ourselves as sojourners in the land, we see ourselves as citizens who can help determine what happens in that land.

Jeremiah hears the Lord say to "seek the welfare of the city" (Jeremiah 29:7), but he is not told to rule the city. Are we Christians a better witness by showing our culture holy lives rather than by trying to coerce others to live holy lives?

While the culture is talking—however superficially—about values, perhaps we should take the opportunity to steer the conversation toward virtues: how we live out those values.

Douglas Kaufman (page 14) points out that Jesus prays that his followers live in unity. We will only do that, Kaufman says, as we focus on Jesus and become more like him. I realize that sounds simple, when it's really complex. It will require love and listening, values and virtues we all need.

FILMS

This year has seen several animated movies, and more will come in 2005. This year's best is **The Incredibles** (PG). It appeals to both adults, with its engaging characters (except for a dull villain), and to children, with its adventure. It's also funny and promotes the idea of families being honest and working together. **The Polar Express** (G), on the other hand, appeals primarily to young children and is overladen with its secular Christmas message. While it has some beautiful sets, its realistic animation actually distracts from the story. The abundant humor in **Shrek 2** (PG) is geared more to adults than young children, who won't catch the many pop culture references. Puss 'n Boots steals the show.

BOOKS

Performing the Faith: Bonhoeffer and the Practice of Nonviolence by Stanley Hauerwas (Brazos Press, 2004, $19.99) begins with Bonhoeffer's claim that if our common life rests on lies and injustice, we cannot be a community of peace, then moves on to other subjects. Throughout, however, Hauerwas emphasizes that faith is to be lived ("performed"). In a pacifist response to Sept. 11, he says that Christians are not called to be heroes or shoppers but holy. And "holiness," he writes, is "a set of practices to sustain a people who refuse to have their lives determined by the fear and denial of death." Hauerwas can be heavy going for some, but he is also engaging and funny.

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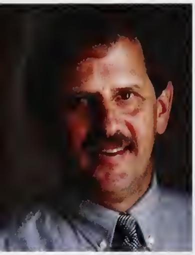


Everett J. Thomas

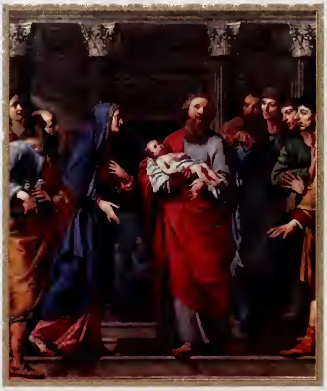
A Simeon and Anna Christmas

For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.—Luke 2:30-32

For those of us allergic to the stale sentimentalities that seep into this season, the stories of Simeon and Anna in Luke 2 offer a fresh view of the age-old Christmas story. Instead of gathering at the manger in a crude stable, imagine being in the Temple in Jerusalem a few days later, when the infant Jesus was surrounded by his community of faith as he was dedicated to God.

The accounts of Simeon and Anna are usually ignored in the details surrounding Jesus' birth. But most of us can relate better to their stories than to shepherds watching flocks by night or magi with gifts of frankincense, gold and myrrh. Perhaps that is because we, too, have participated in dedication services for infants in our worship services and have been moved by the mystery and meaning of a life yet unlived.

Most of us can relate better to Simeon and Anna than to shepherds watching flocks by night or magi with gifts of frankincense, gold and myrrh.



Philippe de Champagne

Both Simeon and Anna were waiting in the Temple when Joseph and Mary arrived. The parents traveled from Bethlehem to Jerusalem to perform the rituals expected in this Ancient Near Eastern world. Jesus had been circumcised on his eighth day and given a name for the first time ("The name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb," says Luke). The journey to the Temple enabled Joseph and Mary to present their infant boy—as Hebrew parents did with first-born sons—as holy to the Lord.

According to Luke, Simeon was a devout and righteous man. The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not die until he saw the Lord's Messiah and then guided Simeon into the Temple. Taking the baby into his hands, Simeon realized that he would die in peace because he beheld—and "held"—the Messiah. Simeon burst into a hymn, proclaiming the infant God's salvation and "a light for revelation to the Gentiles."

Anna, who was widowed after just seven years of marriage, had spent some 60 years in the Temple doing little but fasting and praying. She "began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem."

These respected elders were the special witnesses God placed at that moment in history when Jesus was dedicated. By including them in his account of Jesus' first days, Luke adds a layer of validation to Jesus' stature as the Messiah (Luke's readers would have understood them as authoritative witnesses confirming Jesus' status from the beginning of his life).

Seventeenth-century French artist Philippe de Champagne helps us imagine. Joseph and Mary (left) listen with amazement as Simeon turns his eyes toward heaven and speaks of seeing God's salvation. Perhaps the woman over his shoulder is Anna, proclaiming the Messiah in her own voice.

This Christmas, imagine being in a worship service where two trusted elders bring the infant Jesus before all angels of the universe, all Christians of the world who lived in the past and celebrated Christ's birth in their ways and all Christians around the world today.

In this celestial gathering, Simeon and Anna declare that salvation is at hand: God has come to earth in human form. In the company of God's people, the Messiah is revealed. Immanuel—God with us—is the miracle that makes Christmas holidays into holy days.—*ejt*

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